

1 **LAND USE MANAGEMENT**
2 **AND**
3 **RESOURCE CONSERVATION PLAN**
4 **2011**
5



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7
8 **This Plan Is Dedicated**
9 **To**
10 **The People of the Meeteetse Conservation District**
11
12 _____

13 **MEETEETSE**
14 **CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

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PREAMBLE

The people of the Meeteetse Conservation District, Park County, Wyoming believe the United States Constitution and Wyoming State Constitution to be the supreme law of the Meeteetse Conservation District. Those documents contain the ultimate protections for the rights of its citizens in regard to customs, culture, economic viability, social stability, and quality of life and they guarantee our freedoms to pursue activities protected by those rights. The people of the Meeteetse Conservation District establish this Land Use Management and Resource Conservation Plan in the spirit of those Constitutions, and reject all activities affecting her citizens which are inconsistent with the provisions of those basic founding documents and which inhibit the rights of her citizens to pursue the freedoms those documents guarantee.

This “LAND USE MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION PLAN, 2011” of the Meeteetse Conservation District has been approved and authorized by the Meeteetse Conservation District Board of Supervisors on this 6th day of July, 2011.

ss/ Louis Abarr
Louis Abarr, Chairman

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PART I

THE MEETEETSE CONSERVATION DISTRICT AND ITS LAND USE MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

This Land Use Management and Resource Conservation Plan (Plan) has been developed in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) Base Funding Criteria as per “Wyoming Conservation Districts Law” (W.S. 11-16-101 through 11-16-134), particularly W.S.11-16-122(b)(iv, xvi, and xvii) in accordance with the Wyoming Administrative Procedure Act, particularly W.S.16-3-101 through 16-3-104.

This Plan is intended to be a guide for the citizens of the Meeteetse Conservation District (MCD), and others, for identifying and respecting the customs, culture, economic viability, social stability and quality of life found in this unique area, and then applying those values to resource conservation, planning, growth, development, and such changes as may occur in the MCD through time.

Elected by the people of the District at general elections by popular vote, the Meeteetse Conservation District (MCD) is a local government and a governmental subdivision of the state as defined and established by the Wyoming Statutes. The MCD Supervisors are the only locally elected board charged specifically with the responsibility of representing local people of the District on natural resource issues.

Wyoming Conservation Districts Law, W.S.11-16-122(b)(xvi), provides that conservation districts may “Develop comprehensive plans...”. This Plan incorporates the efforts of numerous MCD residents from all walks of life and economic sectors, through time. It embodies the local traditions, values and visions that each of those residents brought to the effort, and is the result of considerable research and thought by each of those participants and the neighbors they represent. It also draws on the successful planning efforts of other conservation districts and counties and attempts to recognize common issues being dealt with by those entities.

Besides fulfilling the desire to operate in compliance with policy from the WDA, development of this Plan is in recognition of the fact that the federal government manages over 58% of the lands within the MCD. Federal management of these lands intertwines with, and impacts, the abilities of private citizens in the MCD to pursue activities according to traditional and historic customs and culture. Federal management also infuses a never-ending stream of regulations and out-of-county opinion into the daily lives of MCD citizens. Past experience has shown that some of these regulations and opinions have not always worked for the good of the MCD’s people, and have sometimes been implemented over their objections, local knowledge, and better judgment.

The MCD has long been respectful of the constitutional concept of private property rights. It has been the custom and culture of citizens of the area to hold their private rights free from meddling by outside government and interest groups, and to respect the private rights of their neighbors. It is the intent of this Plan to be a mechanism whereby the general public, outside interest groups, and both federal and State land managers can recognize, understand, and honor the customs, culture, economic viability, social structure and quality of life of the citizens of the MCD.

1 Nothing in this document may be used for the taking of any private property, or property right,
2 without constitutional due process and full and complete compensation to all victims thereof.

3 It is an overarching ambition of this Plan that federal, State, and County management actions
4 within and involving the MCD will be cooperative and productive. The MCD is well aware of
5 the statutes requiring federal agencies to give consideration to local land use plans, resolve
6 inconsistencies in federal plans, and provide for meaningful involvement of local government
7 in the management processes. It is the intent of this planning process and the resultant Plan that
8 those mandates are complied with, and that the MCD's Land Use Management and Resource
9 Conservation Plan be fully recognized.

10 This Plan is intended to be strategic and aspirational, relying on the highest degree of insight
11 possible within constraints of time and budget.

12 Part I of the plan includes a brief history of the Meeteetse Conservation District, selected
13 physical attributes, custom, culture, social structure, economy, and selected demographics. Part
14 II of the Plan contains plan components, including goals, objectives, and policy, with those
15 components explained in terms of MCD and related local area customs, culture, economic
16 viability and social stability as appropriate. Proposed management actions and continued or
17 future planning activities are found in Part II of the Plan as well. Although the Plan is divided
18 into several individual segments, no portion of the plan is mutually exclusive, i.e. concepts
19 embodied in any part of the Plan are applicable to all parts of the Plan, even without being
20 specifically mentioned.

21 The MCD wishes to thank the Park County Board of Commissioners, Fremont County and its
22 Natural Resources Planning Committee, Hot Springs County and its Natural Resources
23 Planning Committee, and the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts for valuable
24 assistance in developing this Plan.

25 The revision process for this Plan is in accordance with the planning philosophy of the MCD as
26 contained in the Plan "...it is the intent of the MCD that this Plan be updated on an annual basis
27 in order that a continuous functional vision of the foreseeable future, perhaps three to ten years,
28 is provided to guide the MCD planning over the shorter term."

29 With respect to the prior version of this Plan, the changes that have been made include:

- 30 • Grammar and punctuation edited.
- 31 • Board-authorized policy updated
- 32 • Definitions and citations updated.

34 **AUTHORITY TO PLAN:**

35 Authority for the MCD to plan is given under Wyoming Conservation Districts Law (W.S. 11-
36 16-101 through 11-16-134), particularly W.S.11-16-122(b) (iv, xvi, and xvii) in accordance
37 with the Wyoming Administrative Procedure Act, particularly W.S.16-3-101 through 16-3-104
38 and to file said plans with the Park County Clerk. Furthermore, the MCD may engage in joint
39 activities by agreement with other districts for planning, financing, constructing, operating,
40 maintaining and administering any program or project concerned with the conservation of
41 renewable natural resources. (W.S. 11-16-121(b))

The following county authorities are relevant to this plan at such time as Park County may coordinate the Park County Land Use Plan with this Plan or develop its own Land Use Management and Resource Conservation Plan.

In 1975, the Wyoming Legislature enacted the State Land Use Planning Act, (W.S. 9-8-101 through 9-8-302) which mandates counties to “develop a local land use plan within their jurisdiction”. (W.S. 9-8-301(a))

W.S. 9-8-301(c) requires that all counties develop a countywide land use plan which incorporates the land use plans of all incorporated cities and towns within the county.

Further, the development and adoption of this plan is in conformance with W.S. 9-8-302, which States, “The duty, procedures and requirements for public hearings and responsibility for land use planning at the local level shall be exercised ... by the respective counties pursuant to W.S. 18-5-201 et seq.”

State land use planning, of which this plan is a part, is allowed on federal lands as long as such land use planning does not include zoning. Federal agencies cannot claim "Constitutional Supremacy" if the agency can comply with both federal law and the local land use plan. Also, Congress has demonstrated its understanding of land use planning and environmental regulation as distinct activities. (*California Coastal Commission v. Granite Rock Co.*, 480 U.S. 572(1987))

When considering preemption, the U.S. Supreme Court will not assume that the State's historic powers are superseded by federal law unless that is the clear manifest purpose of Congress. (Wisconsin Public U.S. Intervenor v. Mortier, 111 S. Ct. 2475 (1991))

Section 1.01 COORDINATION REQUIREMENTS

This Plan provides a positive guide for the people of the Meeteetse Conservation District.

Law requires agencies to coordinate their management activities in a manner consistent with local plans. The intent for this legislative requirement is to ensure that agency actions provide benefit, rather than harm, to local citizenry. Only through coordination with the jurisdiction of the MCD can this mandate be achieved.

Within its duties as defined by state law, the Meeteetse Conservation District resolves to exercise its standing and authority to engage in coordination with federal and state agencies that manage land, water, natural resources and the general environment within boundaries of and affecting the lands under oversight of the District. The MCD further resolves to actively pursue, through the coordination process, consistency between its policies, plans and actions and those of the federal and state agencies that manage and/or oversee land, water, natural resources, and the general environment within the boundaries of and affecting the lands, water, natural resources and general environment under oversight of the District. (MCD Resolution, February 9, 2011)

(A) Notification; Coordination with the Meeteetse Conservation District

The MCD, its citizens, and the Park County Commission recognize that federal law mandates multiple use of federally managed lands and have long supported multiple use, not only for federally managed lands but also for State managed lands. Sustained multiple use necessarily includes continued historic and traditional economic uses,

which have occurred on federally and State managed lands within and affecting the MCD.

Upon gaining Statehood, the State of Wyoming retained concurrent civil and criminal jurisdiction by the State of Wyoming on all lands ceded to the federal government (W.S. 36-10-103). To this end, local agencies must require federal coordination with State law.

Therefore, it is the policy of the MCD that federal and State agencies shall notify the Board in writing of all pending or proposed actions and coordinate with the Board in the planning and implementation of those actions. For the purposes of this plan, official notification shall be constituted by delivery of information documents to the attention of the Chairman of the Meeteetse Conservation District, P.O. Box 237, Meeteetse, WY 82433. Electronic correspondence must be sent to mcd@tctwest.net.

(B) Federal Involvement

Federal laws governing land management, mandate coordination by the managing agency.

Wyoming law, on the other hand, requires that the State Land Use Commission must “Cooperate with federal agencies ... in a manner to assure that no federal intervention or control shall take place in the initial or continuing ... local land use planning process”. (W.S. 9-8-202(a)(xii)) The law is clear on the following facts:

- 1) The MCD is authorized to have a land management and resource conservation plan. (W.S. 11-16-101 et seq.)
- 2) The State is required to prevent federal interference or control in a Local Government’s land use efforts. (W.S. 9-8-202(a)(xii))
- 3) The federal agencies are required to coordinate their actions with the MCD; authorities provided or cited throughout this plan.

President Bush’s Executive Order for Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation, August 26, 2004 (excerpted):

Section 1. Purpose. The purpose of this order is to ensure that the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, and Defense and the Environmental Protection Agency implement laws relating to the environment and natural resources in a manner that promotes cooperative conservation, with an emphasis on appropriate inclusion of local participation in Federal decisionmaking, in accordance with their respective agency missions, policies, and regulations.

Sec. 2. Definition. As used in this order, the term "cooperative conservation" means actions that relate to use, enhancement, and enjoyment of natural resources, protection of the environment, or both, and that involve collaborative activity among Federal, State, local, and tribal governments, private for-profit and nonprofit institutions, other nongovernmental entities and individuals.

Sec. 3. Federal Activities. To carry out the purpose of this order, the Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, and Defense and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall, to the extent permitted by law and subject to the availability of appropriations and in coordination with each other as appropriate:

(a) carry out the programs, projects, and activities of the agency that they respectively head that implement laws relating to the environment and natural resources in a manner that:

(i) facilitates cooperative conservation;

(ii) takes appropriate account of and respects the interests of persons with ownership or other legally recognized interests in land and other natural resources;

(iii) properly accommodates local participation in Federal decisionmaking; and

43CFR1610.3-2 Consistency requirements:

(c) State Directors and District and Area Managers shall, to the extent practicable, keep apprised of State and local governmental ... policies, plans, and programs, but they shall not be accountable for ensuring consistency if they have not been notified, in writing, by State and local governments ... of an apparent inconsistency.

36CFR219.14 (National Forest...Planning) Involvement of State and local governments. The responsible official must provide early and frequent opportunities for State and local governments to:

(a) Participate in the planning process, including the identification of issues; and

(b) Contribute to the streamlined coordination of resource management plans or programs.

36CFR219.1 (National Forest...Planning) Interaction with private landowners.

The responsible official must seek to collaborate with those who have control or authority over lands adjacent to or within the external boundaries of national forests or grasslands to identify:

(a) Local knowledge;

(b) Potential actions and partnership activities;

(c) Potential conditions and activities on the adjacent lands that may affect management of National Forest System lands, or vice versa; and

(d) Issues (Sec. 219.4).

40 CFR Part 1506.2 (Council on Environmental Quality) Other Requirements of NEPA

(b) Agencies shall cooperate with State and local agencies to the fullest extent possible to reduce duplication between NEPA and State and local requirements, unless the agencies are specifically barred from doing so by some other law. Except for cases covered by paragraph (a) of this section, such cooperation shall to the fullest extent possible include:

(1) Joint planning processes.

(2) Joint environmental research and studies.

(3) Joint public hearings (except where otherwise provided by statute).

(4) Joint environmental assessments.

43 U.S. § 1701, The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), declared the National Policy to be that “the national interest will be best realized if the public lands and their resources are periodically and systematically inventoried and their present and future use is projected through a land use planning process coordinated with other federal and State planning efforts” (43 U.S.C. § 1701(a)(2)).

43 U.S.C. § 1712(c) of FLPMA, sets forth the “criteria for development and revision” of land use plans. Section 1712 (c)(9) refers to the coordinate status of a county which is engaging in land use planning, and requires that the Secretary [of Interior] “shall . . . coordinate the land use inventory, planning, and management activities . . . with the land use planning and management programs of . . . local governments within which the lands are located.” This provision of federal law assures the County status over the general public, and/or special interest groups of citizens in the decision making process.

43 U.S.C. § 1712, also provides that the Secretary of Interior “shall . . . assist in resolving, to the extent practical, inconsistencies between federal and non-federal government plans.” This provision also gives status to those counties, which are engaged in the planning process over the general public, and/or special interest groups of citizens. In view of the requirement that the Secretary of Interior “shall coordinate” land use inventory, planning and management activities with local governments, it is reasonable to read the requirement of assisting in resolving inconsistencies to mean that the resolution process takes place during the agency’s planning cycle, instead of at the end when the draft federal plan is released for public review. Either way, it is clear that agencies must resolve their inconsistencies prior to any action going into effect.

The same section of FLPMA further requires that the Secretary of Interior “shall . . . provide for meaningful public involvement of State and local government officials . . . in the development of land use programs, land use regulations, and land use decisions for public lands.” When read in light of the “coordinate” requirement of the section, it is reasonable to read “meaningful involvement” as referring to on-going consultations and involvement throughout the planning cycle not merely at the end of the planning cycle. This latter provision of the statute also distinguishes the elevated status of local government officials from members of the general public or special interest groups of citizens in the decision making process.

43 U.S.C. § 1712 (c) (9) further provides that the Secretary of Interior must assure that the BLM’s land use plan be “consistent with State and local plans” to the maximum extent possible under federal law and the purposes of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. It is reasonable to read this statutory provision in association with the requirement of coordinated involvement in the planning process.

The provisions of 43 U.S.C. § 1712 (c) (9) of FLPMA set forth the nature of the coordination required by the Bureau with respect to the planning efforts by local government officials. Subsection (f) of Section 1712 sets forth an additional requirement that the Secretary of Interior “shall allow an opportunity for public involvement” which again includes local governments. The “public involvement” provisions of Subsection (f) do not limit the coordination language of Section 1712 (c) (9) or allow the Bureau to simply lump local government officials in with State

government, special interest groups of citizens or members of the public in general. The coordination requirements of Section 1712 (c) (9) set apart for special involvement those government officials who are engaged in the land management and resource conservation planning process, as is the MCD. The statutory language distinguishes the MCD because engaging in the land management and resource conservation planning process fulfills the Board's obligation to plan for future management and uses which will serve the welfare of all the people of the MCD and promote continued operation of the elected government of the MCD in the best interests of its people.

Another federal Act, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that all federal agencies consider the impacts of their actions on the environment and on the preservation of the culture, heritage and custom of local government. In 42 U.S.C. § 4331 (a) the law provides as follows:

“...it is the continuing responsibility of the Federal Government, in cooperation with State and local governments, and other concerned public and private organizations, to use all practicable means and measures, including financial and technical assistance, in a manner calculated to foster and promote the general welfare, to create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony, and fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Americans.”

(b) In order to carry out the policy set forth in this chapter, it is the continuing responsibility of the Federal Government to use all practicable means, consistent with other essential considerations of national policy, to improve and coordinate Federal plans...

Thus, the National Environmental Policy Act requires federal agencies to consider the impact of their actions on the custom of the people as shown by their beliefs, social forms, and “material traits.” It is reasonable to read this provision of the National Environmental Policy Act as requiring federal agencies to consider the impact of their actions on rural, range-oriented, agricultural counties such as Park County and within local governmental jurisdictions, such as the MCD, where, for generations, families have depended upon the “material traits” of ranching, farming, mining, timber production, wood products, and other agricultural lines of work for their economic livelihoods.

(C) *State Involvement*

While no State statute specifically mandates coordination of planning by State agencies regarding management of State lands, such coordination is implicitly contemplated by the provisions of the Land Use Planning Act of 1975, Wyoming Statutes § 9-8-101 thru 9-8-302.

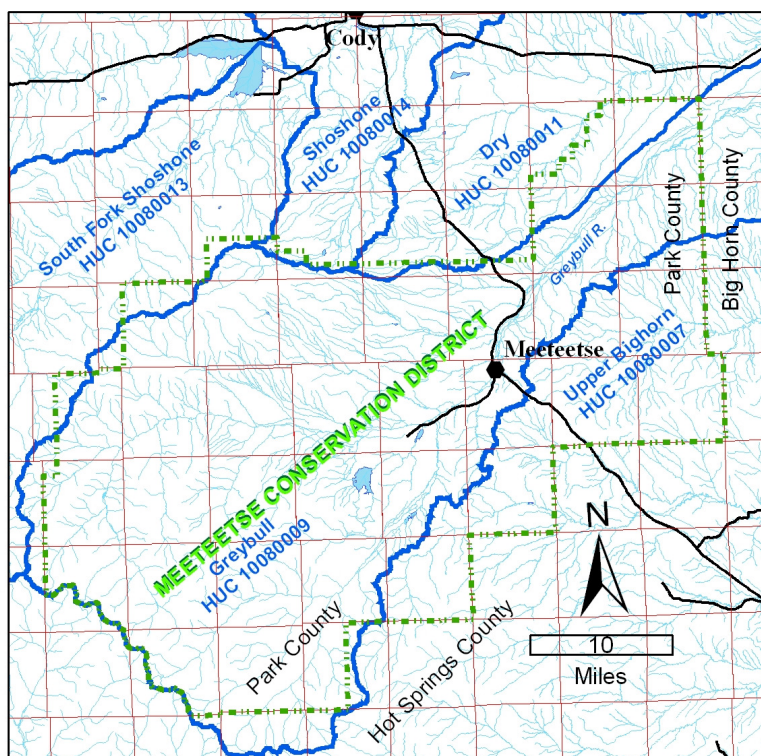
The Wyoming Land Use Commission under W.S. 9-8-202(a) has the power and duty to: (xiii) Coordinate land use planning activities with other state agencies, boards, commissions and departments; and (xiv) Provide technical assistance, information and education to the state, counties, municipalities, regions and political subdivisions of the state, relative to land use planning.

1 Specifically, W.S. 9-8-202(a)(xii) calls upon the State land use commission “to assure
2 that no federal intervention or control shall take place in the initial or continuing ...
3 local land use planning process”. This, in itself, speaks to clear legislative intent
4 supporting local control of the land use planning process. That, after all, is the very
5 reason we have local governments. Local governments and subdivisions of state
6 government are closest to the people and are therefore, closest to the needs and desires
7 of the people in that subdivision of the State.

CHARACTER OF THE MEETEETSE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Section 1.01 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The MCD is a political subdivision of state government and its boundaries, in many places, do not correspond to physical boundaries on the landscape. Since the majority of the MCD lies within the Greybull River watershed and the MCD boundary in most places is near or similar to the watershed boundary, Article III of this plan, especially when describing the physical environment, generally construes “watershed” and “MCD” as equivalent. The significant differences are noted in the dialogue.



(A) Air Quality

The air quality in the MCD is currently presumed to be very good or excellent. Windblown material and noticeable reduction in visibility is commonly associated with weather-related phenomena. Baseline air quality data within the MCD was not found during the research for this Plan.

Regulatory measures related to air quality have, for years, been recognized as a concern in the MCD, especially regarding smoke. Fire is a common resource management tool and the State has worked hard to balance the need for burning with air quality regulations. As “wildland fire use” by the USDA-Forest Service has led to individual fires burning over tens of thousands of acres for durations of weeks or months, concern about air quality and human health have developed. Notably, the Little Venus fire of 2006 resulted in many days of smoke in Meeteetse and complaints were common among residents of the MCD. Air quality is not only important to the health of the citizens but to the economy due to aesthetic values sought by tourists and visitors.

(B) Geography and Geology

The MCD lies on the west side of the Big Horn Basin, a large structural and topographical basin. The basin is roughly 10,000 square miles in area and bounded by the Beartooth, Absaroka, Owl Creek, Bridger, Big Horn and Pryor mountains. These mountains were generally uplifted during the mountain-building Laramide orogeny, named after Wyoming's Laramie mountain range, which began around 55 – 80 million years ago during the late Cretaceous period and ended 35 – 50 million years ago. The Laramide orogeny caused the building of most of the mountain ranges in the Rocky Mountain region. Volcanic activity in the last 100 million years has had a major influence on the topography and geologic setting of the area. Thick bentonite layers in the sedimentary strata are evidence of violent volcanic eruptions. Volcanism is still present near the MCD, evidenced by recent earthquakes, geysers and hot springs. Yellowstone Lake is in the caldera of the volcano that created many of the geologic features of the Absaroka Mountains on the west side of the MCD.

Generally, the MCD political boundary is the Greybull River watershed within Park County and it has three major geographic and geologic zones, from West to East (and from higher to lower elevation). The geology of the three zones is described in terms of "bedrock geology" which in many places is covered by younger quaternary rocks and unconsolidated deposits of Pleistocene and Holocene (recent) age.

The first zone is the Absaroka Mountains (including the 13,153 foot Frances Peak, the highest point in the MCD) - intrusive rocks and volcanic strata of the Absaroka volcanic province and that, in the MCD, lie unconformably on top of older, generally Mesozoic age, sedimentary rocks. The Absaroka volcanic province is composed chiefly of Eocene andesitic volcanic and volcanoclastic sandstone, siltstone, claystone, conglomerate, and breccia. Volcanism occurred between 44 and 49 million years ago when 10,000-ft high andesitic stratovolcanos formed and were rapidly eroded and redistributed into a 6,000 ft thick blanket of reworked, epiclastic volcanic rocks. The present erosion cycle has carved a spectacular, rugged, mountainous topography into the thick volcanic pile. Related to that erosion are ubiquitous mass wasting phenomena. Rock slides, rockfall, slump, earthflow, mudflow, soil creep, and virtually all combinations of and transitions between these processes are common in the Absaroka Mountains in the MCD.

The second zone is the "shoulder" of the basin that sits between the mountains and the lower elevations of the basin. This section is up to 18 miles wide and forms a series of hills and benches at the foot of the higher mountains. In the MCD, these shoulders are made almost entirely of tilted Cretaceous age sedimentary rocks and extend a few miles easterly of Wyoming Highway 120.

The third zone is made up of the relatively flat-lying sedimentary rocks of tertiary age that are highly dissected by the Greybull River and its tributary drainages. Where the Greybull River flows into Bighorn County, the elevation is approximately 4,690 feet above sea level.

Erosional forces of glaciation, wind, and water have combined to mold the landscape into what we now see today. During the Pleistocene ice age, glaciers covered the MCD and produced many of the erosional forms in the landscape. Quaternary alluvial pediments cap many terraces and ridges, while recent alluvial sediments make up the current Greybull River plain. It is reported that at least 1,000 feet of the deposited sediment has been eroded from the Big Horn Basin.

1 Erosion is currently dominant in the MCD. Wind, water, heat and freezing all combine to
2 continually erode the mountains and foothills, and deposit the material in the lower elevations
3 of the plains. The state of equilibrium is not yet reached, and the migration of streams and
4 rivers, avalanches and earthquakes, rainfall and snowfall, and wind will continue to act to level
5 the landforms in the MCD.

6 Precipitation (water equivalent) in the basin ranges over 40 inches per year in the high
7 mountain headwaters to less than 6 inches per year in parts of the dry basin. Much of the
8 precipitation falls as snow leading to large fluctuations in annual hydrologic discharge,
9 including torrential stream flows during snow melt runoff (Curtis and Grimes, 2004) resulting
10 in interesting and varied processes affecting the geomorphology (the geologic study of
11 landscape evolution over time) in the basin.

12 The upper mountain areas have high energy streams that easily move materials that are
13 deposited by active mass wasting geomorphic processes. This creates a steep, rugged, and
14 beautiful landscape that is characteristic, and even defines Wyoming's mountain systems. The
15 geomorphology in the lower elevations of the basin is less spectacular but equally important in
16 defining the look and shape of the landscapes. Low precipitation contributes to low vegetative
17 cover. This is combined with soft sedimentary rocks and flashy precipitation. The result is a
18 natural high desert environment that is prone to erosion. Sheet, rill, gully, and wind erosion are
19 all present. High rates of erosion, slow rates of soils formation and limited precipitation
20 combine to form an environment where change is easily noted and amplified. It is difficult or
21 impossible to say what level of geomorphic change would be considered "natural" in the basin,
22 but anthropogenic (human influenced) practices have significant capacity for positive, and/or
23 negative impact on those rates of change. The Greybull River itself consists of tributaries that
24 could be characterized as torrential, high elevation, mountain streams with high channel slopes,
25 unstable substrates, and large fluctuations in discharge from spring to late summer (Hansen and
26 Glover, 1973).

28 **(C) Climate**

29 One outstanding climatic fact, the lack of moisture, is undoubtedly the single most important
30 factor on life in the area. The climate of the MCD is effectively that of the Greybull River
31 Watershed.

32 The climate of MCD is central among the forces which have shaped the landscape of the
33 watershed; rain, snow, wind, frost and sun action are all prevalent. The climate of the
34 watershed is influenced by the mountains surrounding it. Westerly air masses coming from the
35 Pacific release the majority of their moisture along the western slopes of the north-south
36 mountain ranges. The area east of the mountains, including the Greybull watershed, is
37 characterized as being semiarid and is dominated by high plains. It is difficult to classify
38 simple climatic regions within the state due to the highly variable elevations and topography
39 (Curtis and Grimes, 2004).

40 Precipitation in the basin is concentrated in May and June, falling mostly in scattered showers.
41 Yearly averages of specific recording stations in Big Horn Basin include Cody at 9.38 inches,
42 Powell at 5.65 inches, and Sunshine at 17.13 inches. Variability can be extreme in the basin,
43 with cloudbursts and thunderstorms during the mid and late summer producing high intensity,
44 low duration storms that can influence debris and stream flows.

Potential evaporation exceeds 25 inches, roughly three times actual precipitation in the driest areas of the watershed. The extreme temperature range over a year may be as much as 149 degrees. The highest temperatures, exceeding 100 degree F, are attained in July and August. The lowest temperatures, which can reach around -50 degree F, generally occur December through February. Temperatures in the mountains range from approximately -30 degree F to 90 degree F.

At higher altitudes average temperatures are low, and the frost-free season shrinks to the point where frost can be expected any day of the year. The average frost-free period in the MCD has a range of about 90 to 120 days depending on elevation. The average growing season at Powell, which is probably longer than the lower Greybull River valley, is approximately 140 days, at Cody it is approximately 119 days, and at Sunshine Reservoir it is less than 100 days. At Meeteetse, the last killing frost of the spring-time is about May 30th and the average first killing frost of the fall is about September 1st.

Like all basins, the Big Horn Basin is subject to temperature inversions, this has an effect on the watershed. Cold air flows out of the mountains into the lowest places. Trapped by a layer of warmer air, the cold air can stagnate and remain in the Basin for several days. In contrast, the Chinook effect provides relief from severe cold temperatures as unseasonably warm downslope winds blow into the area during winter months.

As altitude increases toward the mountains, precipitation increases as well. Above 9,000 feet, snowfall may be 150 to 200 inches. Total precipitation above 9,000 feet ranges from 25 to 40 inches or more with five to six inches falling in summer thundershowers, and the remainder coming in the form of snow pack. About 60% of the annual precipitation falls in the five months from April thru August.

(D) Soils

The soils of the MCD are a function of the climate, topography, local vegetation types, geologic parent materials, and time. Soil parent materials, topography, and climate vary significantly in the watershed. In the mountainous areas of the watershed, the presence of well defined soil structure is minimal, whereas the foothills and valley floors show good to well defined soil structure and horizonation. The valley floors have relatively recent alluvial deposits that are characteristically created from eroded sands, silts, shales, and volcanic rock. The Natural Resources Conservation Service has classified most of the soils in the watershed, though complete mapping is pending. Further inventory and classification will need to take place in order to have a good picture of all the soil distribution in the watershed. Through the identification of soil properties and limitations, land planning and conservation practices can be developed with the most probability of success.

Soils can have a significant effect on interactions between ground water, surface water, and possible non point source pollutants. Coarse high permeability soils allow precipitation events to be captured by the landscape whereas low permeability, fine textured soils have high runoff rates. These vast differences in soil type and texture throughout the watershed have a significant impact on irrigation practices, construction suitability, recreational activities, waste disposal designs, and other activities.

(E) Surface Water

Water, of course, is the key to life.

The semi-arid to arid climate has made adequate water supplies extremely important within the MCD. These supplies have affected the historical settlement and will be critical to future land and resource management.

Although not enough precipitation falls in the warmer months for adequate natural growth of crops, most of the MCD's water supply is accumulated in the mountains in the form of winter snow. This water reservoir melts and is distributed during the runoff period by a system of ditches that allow the water to be used over the length of the growing season in many parts of the county. Water in this arid region is allocated to users under the doctrine of prior appropriation ("first in time is first in right").

The Greybull River is a tributary to the Big Horn and Missouri Rivers', respectively. The list below provides perspective for scale in relation to a watershed hierarchy classification (Maxwell et al, 1995). Note that the Greybull River hydrologic unit (10080009) is further divided into three 5th level sub-watershed units.

Level	Description	Hydrologic Unit Name and Boundary Code (HUB)
1st	Region	Missouri (10)
2nd	Sub-region	Big Horn (1008)
3rd	River Basin	Big Horn (100800)
4th	Sub-basin	Greybull River (10080009)
5th	Watershed	Wood River (1008000902)
5th	Watershed	Upper Greybull River (1008000901)
5th	Watershed	Middle Greybull River (1008000903) S

Stream flow is dominated by melting snow, with a single peak discharge generally occurring in early to mid-June. Summer thunderstorm events are common and can produce short-duration spikes in the hydrograph. The range in stream flows is considerable. Instantaneous peaks in the main stem Greybull River at Meeteetse can be as high as 14,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) (although average peak flow for the period of record is closer to 3,685 cfs), while base flow can be below 100 cfs.

Year to year variability in stream flow is large because it is a function of annual snow pack and the rate at which it melts. Rain on snow events do occur on occasion and can result in very high stream flows. Diurnal fluctuation in stream flow during the snow melt period is great. Daily flows can fluctuate greatly as the river approaches its annual peak flow.

Heavy bedload movement during the snow melt season and debris flow activity during the summer thunderstorm season cause channel reaches within the watershed to continually change as they adjust to the water-sediment budget (sediment supply and stream power). In general streams in the upper elevations are less stable with stability in the upper reaches being realized for short time periods.

Natural sediment source areas include erosion from uplands and lateral scour of stream banks. Both snow melt and rain storm derived stream flows carry very large amounts of suspended and washload sediment. Large volumes of bedload sediment are mobilized and moved during the snow melt season. During summer thunderstorm events considerable amounts of earthen

1 material are eroded from uplands by overland flow, which concentrates in ephemeral channels
2 and is then delivered to mainstem channels in the form of debris flows.

3 Studies by the USFS determined that the majority of the national forest portion of the
4 watershed was in good condition, having no significant alterations of the hydrologic (water)
5 cycle at their scale of study (USFS, 2005). Most of the hydrographs for this study are from the
6 1970's. There are however, alterations of the water cycle in localized areas of the national
7 forest that were identified as concerns. These alterations were associated with historic practices
8 including but not limited to, livestock grazing, trapping of beaver, roading, and mining.
9 Progressing down stream through the watershed significant changes in hydrology occur. From
10 the forest boundary, there is a systematic progression from a mountain dominated high energy
11 stream to a more low energy sediment dominated system. Peak flows are controlled to an
12 extent by the presence of reservoirs and other diversion structures. Riparian zones and
13 vegetation types change significantly as well.

14 Typically, mountain riparian zones are dominated by willows, whereas the lower system is
15 dominated by cottonwoods and grasses.

16 The mountainous sections of the watershed are the major sources of surface water. As much as
17 40 inches of precipitation per year fall in the mountains, as opposed to as little as 6 in the lower
18 portions of the watershed. Irrigation return flows increase stream flow in the lower sections of
19 the watershed. It has been postulated that recharge and return flow are largely responsible for
20 maintaining the year round flow in the lower portion of the watershed in Park County. The
21 effects of recharge from irrigation are more pronounced in the lower tributaries to the Greybull.
22 The Greybull itself is maintained as a perennial stream bellow the Greybull Valley Dam
23 through an agreement with the Greybull Valley Irrigation District (GVID) and the Army Corps
24 of Engineers. Numerous small reservoirs and stock ponds and three large reservoirs (Sunshine,
25 Lower Sunshine, and Roach Gulch) have been constructed in the MCD over the last one
26 hundred years.

27 The water quality of the surface water resources in the MCD differ based on the location within
28 the watershed. The mountainous areas, the lower foothills and wide valley floors all have
29 differing effects on water quality. The effects of man's action on the land, as well as, the
30 existing fauna both have typically unmeasured effects on the water resource that have yet to be
31 adequately evaluated. The MCD recognizes the necessity to inventory and monitor the water
32 resources within the watershed, and is obtaining water quality data and watershed planning is
33 expected to address possible non-point source pollution (irrigation return flows, poor sewage
34 systems, sediment loading, chemical and nutrient overloading).

35 There are many parameters that can be considered when addressing water quality, these may
36 include but are no means limited to: pathogens, water temperature, sediments, physical and
37 biological characteristics, and others. These parameters can be either numeric in nature, having
38 quantitative limits and measures, or narrative. Many of these properties affect the uses of a
39 waterbody and have the potential to affect human, wildlife (aquatic and terrestrial) and
40 livestock health.

41 Of particular concern is the fact that the Greybull River was listed in 2002 for fecal coliform
42 bacteria in a portion of its lower reach. This "impairment" has been defined by the Wyoming
43 Department of Environmental Quality in their 303(d) list of water bodies with water quality
44 impairments. The fecal coliform standard has since been replaced by an *E. coli* standard. It is
45 important to note that *E. coli* levels are particularly significant because *E. coli* is used as an

indicator for the possible presence of other pathogens. Because of the concerns about human health and the possible socioeconomic affects of having “impaired” water, mitigating the *E. coli* impairment is to be addressed in the Greybull River Watershed Plan.

Although the *E. coli* impairment provided the impetus for MCD watershed planning efforts, it is by no means the only water quality concern that is important within the watershed. Just as *E. coli* may be an indicator of overall pathogen levels, other water quality parameters are indicators of overall watershed health. It is a goal of the Greybull River Watershed Plan as well as this Plan to proactively work to maintain and improve the condition of resources within the Greybull River Watershed.

(F) Groundwater

Surface-related groundwater in the watershed is generally confined to the sediments in areas adjacent to streams and rivers. Known as alluvial aquifers, they are generally composed of silts, sands and gravels underlain by sedimentary sandstone, shale, and by volcanic rocks in the higher area of the watershed. The aquifers in areas not directly influenced by the streams and rivers, known as bedrock or confined aquifers, are generally within underground permeable sandstones and limestone.

Water quality information is generally limited to the knowledge of landowners whose wells rely on the aquifers. As a whole, water quality appears to be acceptable with or without secondary treatment (reverse osmosis). Some artesian wells also occur within the watershed and springs are where water from either alluvial or confined aquifers comes to the surface.

Water quality can vary significantly depending on the geologic formation accessed through drilling. High levels of Total Dissolved Solids (TDS), metals, or other naturally occurring constituents can modify the quality of the ground water depending on a specific formation, depth, or other factors. Human induced negative effects on groundwater quality have not been widely noted in the watershed.

It may be realistic to presume that the total development potential of lands within the MCD may be estimated through the comprehensive knowledge of the water resources available for use.

(G) Vegetation

Within the watershed, vegetation provides food resources, aesthetic quality, erosion control, ecologic function, and economic benefit. Vegetation is a crucial component of the watershed, influencing water quality and quantity. Vegetation also impacts river/stream flow and dynamics. In order to better understand the vegetation within the watershed, detailed description of the vegetation zones have been included below:

The following vegetation zones are dependant on elevation, topography, climate, soils, slope, and aspect. Typical elevations are very general. The following descriptions are compiled from NRCS publications, the poster Ecoregions of Wyoming, a joint publication of USEPA, USGS, WDEQ, NRCS, BLM, and USFS (Chapman, *et. al.*, 2003), and other references. A listing of historic native climax vegetation and other information can be accessed at the NRCS eFOTOG website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Technical/efotg/>.

Alpine: This zone exists from the top of the mountains to the top of the conifer tree line (above 10,000 feet, the Alpine ecoregion of Chapman, *et. al.*, 2003). Alpine tundra, rocky summits, talus slopes, avalanche chutes, scree slopes, alpine lakes, meadows, stream channels, waterfalls,

permanent and temporary snow banks, and some glaciers typify the zone. Most of the vegetation is herbaceous, with grasses, lichens, and sporadic low and dwarf shrubs. Trees present are krummholz (spruce, subalpine fir, and limber pine). Representative forbs may include: alpine forget me not, alpine anemone, alpine bluebells, cushion plants, alpine avens, alpine bistort, sandwort, fleabane, alpine timothy, Idaho fescue, sheep fescue, spike trisetum, tufted hair grass, and sedges.

Subalpine: This zone includes the area from the top of the conifer tree line to the open grasslands and meadows (8,500 to 10,000 feet, Absaroka Volcanic subalpine Zone and portions of the Absaroka/Gallatin Volcanic Mountains ecoregions of Chapman, *et. al.*, 2003). Most of the trees are conifers, however some species of deciduous trees (aspen and cottonwood) are also found. The forested areas are generally dominated by coniferous trees such as Engelmann spruce, subalpine fir, lodgepole pine, whitebark pine, limber pine, and others. Other species may include quaking aspen, sumac, buffaloberry, snowberry, black elderberry, huckleberry, birchleaf spirea, grouse whortleberry, elk sedge, pinegrass, heartleaf arnica, yellow glacier lily, larkspur, monkshood, and geranium. Springs, ponds and lakes with montane meadows (parks) maybe surrounded by aspen trees and densely populated lodgepole are common in the middle of the zone.

Montane: The montane zone (7,000 to 8,500 feet, the Absaroka/Gallatin Volcanic Mountains Ecoregion of Chapman, *et. al.*, 2003) supports the greatest variety of vegetation. Trees in the lower zone are in open forest, with ground cover of shrubs and grasses, and large open areas are common. Some of the open areas are wet meadows of sedges and willows and others are open grasslands. Representative species may include Douglas fir, lodgepole pine, ponderosa pine, limber pine, juniper, quaking aspen, red osier dogwood, prairie rose, common bearberry, white fir, wax currant, birchleaf spirea, huckleberry, antelope bitterbrush, coralroots, pinegrass, dwarf mistletoe, sulphur buckwheat, geranium, heartleaf arnica, timber oatgrass, blue grama, wheatgrass species, prairie junegrass, mountain brome, and elk sedge.

Foothill Shrublands and Low Mountains (5,000 to 7,000 feet, the Foothill Shrublands and Low Mountains Ecoregion of Chapman, *et. al.*, 2003) - On the lower slopes of the mountains this zone is comprised of shrubs and small deciduous trees. Juniper trees also occur in the foothills. Wyoming big sagebrush is the dominant mid-to late seral species within this plant assemblage. Other species may include rabbitbrush, antelope bitterbrush, wax currant, black sagebrush, mahogany, cinquefoil, spiny hopsage, winterfat, narrow leaf hawksbeard, larkspur, phlox, plains prickly pear, yarrow, lupine, geranium, pentstemon, death camas, balsamroot, mules ear, miners candle, scarlet globemallow, blue grama, bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue, needlegrass, needle-and-thread grass, Indian ricegrass, basin wildrye, Sandberg bluegrass, bottlebrush squirreltail, and rhizomatous wheatgrasses.

River Bottoms: Along the river and streams at lower elevations (less than 7,000 feet) the vegetation in the watershed riparian zone is dominated by a cottonwood overstory, willows, buffaloberry, snowberry, alder, water birch, red osier dogwood, as well as invasive species such as Russian olives, and saltcedar. Understory is typically composed of sedges, cattails, basin wildrye, brome, bluegrass, as well as other grasses and invasive species. Swampy and wetland areas adjacent to the streams are typically occupied by cattails, and various rushes and sedges. Overlap of alpine plants typically occurs in the moist sites of riparian areas.

Bighorn Basin: Vegetation in the lower elevations (5,000 to 7,500 feet Ecoregion of Chapman, *et. al.*, 2003) of the watershed is sparse, typical of a high plains desert. This condition can be attributed to the lack of moisture throughout the growing season and the arid soils of the region.

The annual precipitation is typically between 8 and 14 inches. The climax plants are bluebunch wheatgrass, western wheatgrass, Indian ricegrass, and needle and thread grass with five to fifteen percent sagebrush being common. The saline upland areas have saltbrush and the lowland areas have greasewood. Other vegetation of interest includes: Sandberg bluegrass, cactus, rabbitbrush, and various species of wildflowers and forbs.

Desert and Basins (4,000 to 5,800 feet Bighorn Salt Desert and Shrub Basins Ecoregion of Chapman, *et. al.*, 2003): Vegetation in the lower elevations of the watershed is sparse, typical of a high plains desert. This condition can be attributed to the lack of moisture throughout the growing season as well as the arid soils of the region. The annual precipitation is typically between 5 and 9 inches. Shrub species may include: bud sage, birdfoot sagebrush, Gardner saltbush, rabbitbrush, and shadscale. The saline upland areas have saltbush and the lowland areas have greasewood. Other vegetation of interest includes: plains prickly pear cactus, and various species of wildflowers and forbs including larkspur, fleabane, scarlet globemallow, and phlox. The common climax grass species include but are not be limited to: rhizomatous wheatgrasses (including western, thickspike, and streambank wheatgrass), needleandthread grass, Indian ricegrass, along with lesser amounts of blue grama, bottle-brush squirreltail, prairie junegrass, sandberg bluegrass, and upland sedges.

(H) Wildlife and Recreation

Wildlife and fish are a recreational, renewable natural and aesthetic resource in the MCD. Wildlife and fish know no political or jurisdictional boundary. Wildlife is prevalent in all the areas of the MCD. Most wildlife is managed solely by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Private landowners in the MCD also play a role in managing wildlife.

The Big Horn Basin has traditionally supplied habitat for diverse and large natural populations of aquatic and terrestrial wildlife. The area was used extensively by pre-Columbian Native Americans who lived and traveled through the watershed, utilizing its game as a resource. Evidence shows that members of the Shoshone, Crow, Arapahoe and occasionally Sioux tribes, used the area for hunting, temporary occupation, and general travel. The use of the area before these Native Americans is also evidenced by petroglyphs, etc. Game began to be further utilized by fur trappers and traders who entered the Big Horn Basin in the late 1800's. As a State, Wyoming began targeted management of wildlife in the early 1900's (Game and Fish Laws of Wyoming, 1903). It is important to note that management of the natural game resources has played a significant role in shaping the current economy and culture of the Big Horn Basin. Recreational use, including hunting and fishing, is significant within the watershed and makes up an important part of the economy within the basin. The area is a destination for recreationists from within the state and nationwide who utilize it.

Small game species of importance include cottontail rabbit, pheasant, sage grouse, blue grouse, and chucker.

Furbearers include skunk, weasel, raccoon, red fox, and beaver.

Big game populations are significant in the watershed. Numbers are not tracked on a watershed basis, but the population is healthy. Statewide the number of elk herds is 35, with over 90,000 individuals. Mule Deer numbers have declined since a peak in the 1930's-1950's, but they remain a prevalent game animal. Approximately 6,500 mule deer make up the population of the Owl Creek/Meeteetse Herd Unit. Other utilization of terrestrial natural wildlife resources in

1 the area include but are not limited to antelope, moose, bighorn sheep, whitetail deer, predators,
2 furbearers, small game hunting, bird watching, etc.

3 There are several terrestrial species of specific concern within the watershed that have the
4 potential to impact local use and the economy. The gray wolf, grizzly bear, sage grouse, bald
5 eagle, and possibly the Canada lynx can be found in numbers that could be considered
6 significant, based on their potential to impact land use and management decisions within the
7 watershed. One of the major concerns with the wolf and grizzly bear is the manner in which
8 they may be interacting with, and possibly changing the habits of other animals (domestic and
9 wildlife) in the ecosystem. Local land managers have seen changing elk herd dynamics and
10 habitat as a function of wolf reintroduction.

11 Aquatic wildlife in the watershed is also diverse, its management and conservation are
12 important to the overall quality of the environment and life within the basin. Sport fisheries
13 generally concentrate on trout fishing. Within the watershed, streams containing trout are
14 prevalent. Trout can be found throughout the system. Lower elevation portions of the main
15 stem of the Greybull River are seasonally impacted by irrigation dewatering, generally higher
16 water temperatures, increased turbidity, and diminished trout habitat. The lower elevation
17 portions of the drainage have been found to be important habitat for channel catfish, sauger and
18 other native non-game species. The predominance of private lands in the lower elevation
19 portions of the drainage limits angler access.

20 Access in the upper reaches is through USFS lands and mostly by foot and horseback.
21 Consequently, fishing pressure in the drainage is low to moderate. Yellowstone cutthroat are
22 the only trout native to the watershed and are considered a species of concern within the
23 drainage, as well as throughout their historic range. The Greybull River drainage is one of the
24 largest contiguous refugia for genetically pure Yellowstone cutthroat trout. Stocking of non-
25 native rainbow trout occurred as early as 1915. However, this species did not persist and
26 appeared to have no genetic influence on the native cutthroat. The fine spotted form of
27 Yellowstone cutthroat trout, commonly referred to as Snake River cutthroat, were stocked from
28 1972 to 1975 and now occur in some Greybull River tributaries. Maintaining and improving the
29 health of the watershed is important to the long-term conservation of Yellowstone cutthroat
30 trout.

31 Standing waters are limited in the watershed within Park County with Upper and Lower
32 Sunshine Reservoirs, and Greybull Valley Dam providing the majority of angler opportunity.
33 Species present in lakes and river systems within the watershed are not limited to Yellowstone
34 cutthroat. Other game species include, but are not limited to: whitefish, rainbow trout, brown
35 trout, brook trout, splake, and sauger.

36 In addition to private land owners, many interested groups have participated in activities to
37 improve overall conservation and/or recreational opportunities within the watershed and Big
38 Horn Basin as a whole. Those groups include, but are not limited to: The Rocky Mountain Elk
39 Foundation, The Greybull Valley Irrigation District, The Greater Yellowstone Coalition,
40 Backcountry Horseman, The Nature Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, and others. These groups
41 have representation in the local communities.

42 Wildlife resources and their associated value to individuals, communities, agencies and
43 organizations have been, and will continue to be important within the Greybull River
44 Watershed.

Wildlife populations are dynamic. Raccoons and fox, at one time rare in the MCD, are now common. Whitetail deer have been seen increasingly in the more recent years. The mule deer population has increased dramatically within the Meeteetse town limits, leading to agitation on the part of some gardeners for control of their numbers.

Predator control was historically used to protect livestock resources, but it also helped the growth of game animal herds and bird populations which were very low around the turn of the century.

Wildlife diseases, some introduced and some natural to the area, are of great concern both economically and as human health issues in 2004. They include plague, West Nile virus, chronic wasting disease, brucellosis, rabies and tularemia.

(I) Weeds and Pests

Control of mammalian, insect, and weed pests has been a government and private effort since the 1920's. Prairie dogs, pocket gophers, and ground squirrels are common. Grasshopper and Mormon cricket infestations have periodically occurred; pine, spruce, and fir beetles are currently an epidemic in the forest. Principal noxious weeds in the MCD include saltcedar, field bindweed, Canada thistle, musk thistle, Russian olive, hoary cress, and Russian knapweed.

Section 1.02 MEETEETSE CONSERVATION DISTRICT HISTORY

(A) Before the Settlers

Humans have occupied what is now the MCD for over 5,000 years and perhaps longer. Hard archeological evidence is lacking for earlier occupation by humans. However, humans probably traveled through, if not actually stayed here, soon after the last ice age that ended 10,000 to 15,000 years ago.

The first white people to enter the area were most likely fur trappers from Canada. Reportedly, French-Canadian Sieur de La Verendrye and his sons came down through northern Wyoming as far as the Wind River (FCLUP, 2004). John Colter, on his famous winter trek of 1807-08, came from Montana through the Big Horn Basin and may have traveled through the land that became the MCD. The Wilson Price Hunt party may have passed through in 1811. Certainly, during the 1830's men of the fur trade, the "mountain men" were availing themselves of the area's beaver and making use of the area's plentiful natural resources; and doing so, for the most part, without leaving an imprint on the modern landscape. (Larson, 1965)

(B) The Settlers

Acts of Congress which lead to the settlement of the West included the Homestead Act of 1862 (160 acres), the Desert Land Act of 1877 (640 acres of land could be taken up, but before it could be patented it had to be irrigated), the Carey Act of 1894 (states planning irrigation projects to water arid lands would receive one million acres of Federal land (Wyoming was the first to take advantage of this), and the Homestead Act of 1916 (640 acres were allowed, but the federal government reserved the mineral rights) which lead to the problems we now face of split estates. Vacant, unreserved, and unappropriated lands were withdrawn by executive order after the passage of the Taylor Grazing Act in 1934.

1 **(C) Park County Created**

2 Prior to Wyoming becoming a territory in 1868, the principal area of Wyoming, including the
3 area later to become Park County, was comprised of Laramie County and the Dakota Territory.
4 During Wyoming's territorial days, Park County was briefly Carter County which was later
5 changed to Sweetwater County. In 1884, Park County was governed under Fremont County
6 until 1896 when it became a part of Big Horn County. It was during this period in 1890 that
7 Wyoming became a state. Park County was established in 1909 but was not organized until
8 1911 (Park County website).

9 **(D) The Towns**

10 Started in 1884 by Frenchman, Victor Arland, the town of Arland consisted of a store, saloon,
11 restaurant, storehouse, stable, cabins, hotel, and dance hall. By 1896 the nearby town Meeteetse
12 had sprung up and by 1897 the town of Arland had died. Today, nothing remains of Arland.

13 The town of Kirwin was founded in 1891. William Kirwin began prospecting in the area high
14 in the Absaroka Mountains of the Shoshone National Forest in 1885. Gold, silver, copper, zinc
15 and molybdenum were all found during that time. Kirwin, Harry Adams, and sixteen others
16 officially formed the Wood River Gold Mining District in 1891. In 1897, the first ore was
17 shipped from Kirwin. By the turn of the century the Shoshone Mountain Mining Company,
18 Wyoming Mining Company, and Galena Ridge Company had developed the site into one of the
19 West's most promising mining camps. In late 1905 and early 1906 the population of Kirwin
20 was around 200. The town had 38 buildings including a general store, hotel, and a post office.
21 The townfolk hoped for the construction of a smelter to process the ore and an extension of the
22 Burlington Railroad to service the mines at Kirwin. These developments never materialized. In
23 1907 an avalanche nearly wiped out the town. Several buildings were buried and three people
24 died. The town never fully recovered and eventually passed away. The high altitude climate
25 and the lack of significant quantities of ore combined with the factors above contributed to the
26 eventual end of the community. While vast sums of money were never made from the sale of
27 gold, Kirwin's mining contributed to the custom and culture and social fabric of the area as
28 some of the miners undoubtedly rolled with the blows they were dealt and stayed on in
29 Meeteetse or to the ranches or elsewhere.

30 Meeteetse, now the third largest town in Park County, with a population of 351 in 2000 was
31 once described as "An important town in Big Horn County...daily stages to Cody and Basin and
32 south to Thermopolis... Beautifully located on the Grey Bull River and surrounded by a
33 prosperous stock raising and farming country. Good hunting and fishing. Coal is found in
34 abundance. Population 600." (Wyo. State Business Directory, 1906.) In 1921, "Oil production
35 is also an active industry." was added to the description.

36 In 1883, Otto Franc, postmaster of Franc (his ranch), tired of the job, gave it to Mrs. Margaret
37 Wilson, wife of Andrew Wilson who ranched on Meeteetse Creek. She renamed the Post Office
38 "Meeteetse". Following her husband's death, she subsequently moved it to the new town being
39 established nearby on the homestead of Wm. McNally in 1896. The town was incorporated as a
40 village in 1889 and as a town in 1901. The 1901-2 *Wyoming Business Directory* listed 3 hotels,
41 7 mining companies (four of which operated at Kirwin), 2 jewelers and watchmakers, a justice
42 of the peace, a drug store, 1 restaurant, 4 saloons (3 others did not advertise), 2 stage lines, 2
43 banks, a hardware store, a notary, and a large general store called the Mercantile. (Park County,
44 Park County Story Committee, 1980)

The 1906-7 Wyoming Business Directory showed a population of 600, and included a grocery store/provisioner, 2 coal mines, a Chinese laundry, 2 additional stage lines, one telephone company, and 2 newspapers. Also listed were forest ranger, justice of the peace, police magistrate, city clerk, city marshal, and a constable.

Today, the Mercantile exists as a building only. Businesses include but are not limited to: 2 gas stations, one with a food store, 2 restaurant/bars and 1 restaurant, 1 chocolate shop, 1 auto repair shop, 2 motels, 1 antique store, 1 gift shop, 1 coffee/gift shop, 1 art/gift shop, 1 beauty salon, 1 bank, 1 taxidermist, various construction business (including a log home building company), a lumber/sawmill, 1 veterinarian and no doctors or dentists. Meeteetse also has one K-12 school, 3 museums, 1 tourism information center, a recreation center, a senior center, a highway department office, a fire department, town government offices including a sheriff's office, the conservation district office and five churches.

(E) The Meeteetse Conservation District Created

The Meeteetse Conservation District was created through the initiative, petition, hearing and referendum of the electors of Park County, Wyoming. The Certificate of Organization was issued to the MCD on September 22, 1956. The MCD then became a political subdivision of the State of Wyoming. In 1974, the MCD boundary was redefined to match the School District 16 political boundary. The new boundary of the MCD served to eliminate 142,257 acres from its jurisdiction. The acreage severed was recombined into the Cody and Powell-Clark's Fork Conservation Districts.

Section 1.03 MEETEETSE CONSERVATION DISTRICT CUSTOM

The custom of the MCD is composed of those practices having common adoption by the people of the MCD that have persisted through time, including agriculture (Ag) - farming, irrigation, livestock grazing, etc. The Plan recognizes that the custom of the MCD is expected to change through time in response to usage of the existing practices and adoption of new ones. It is the intent of this Plan to support evolution of the MCD custom by providing that cultural change comes from within the community.

The things that have affected the custom of the MCD include:

- Industry - agriculture, mining, oil/gas exploration and production, timbering, etc.
- Infrastructure - Transportation. Communications & Utilities.
- Intangible Values - historical and cultural sites, open space values and access to open space, cultural and personal aesthetic values, conservation, entrepreneurial values, etc.
- Recreation and Tourism - motorized and non-motorized transport and activities, including but not limited to hunting, fishing, water and land sports, hiking, wildlife viewing, dude ranching, etc.
- Water use - agricultural, industrial, recreational, domestic, storage, and general water resource development and conservation.

The People of the MCD migrated to the area because of abundant natural resources. These resources provided a livelihood to the early settlers and nomadic populations. Park County citizens and the People of the MCD have a long history of using federally or State managed lands and waters according to the invitation and enticements of the land use and land disposal acts of those federal and State governments. Recreational and subsistence hunting, and recreational fishing, dude ranching and trail riding, camping and nature appreciation activities all have their roots in the survival skills of early settlers as seated in the customs of their

individual historic cultures. Resulting from that use, the earliest commerce in this county was resource-based on such activities as fur trapping (the earliest white inhabitants of the area were fur trappers), ranching, mining, timbering, and oil drilling. Early recreation activities were likewise resource-based hunting, fishing, and dude ranching. The MCD and Park County has had a reputation as a recreation paradise, the land of big game hunting and sport fishing. Park County is the eastern portal to Yellowstone Park. The Meeteetse Conservation District was created in 1956 in recognition that local values would be degraded or lost unless local conservation efforts were employed.

The present-day County of Park, State of Wyoming, consists of more than four and one half million acres. This land area is made up of only 15.4 % private lands, approximately 5.1% State administered lands, and 79.4% federally managed lands. The federally or State managed lands and resources located in Park County have historically been used for grazing, mining, timber harvest, oil and gas development, and land and water recreation. (Taylor, et al)

Table 1. Land ownership in Park County, 2002.	Acres	Percent
U.S. Forest Service	1,699,791	37.6%
National Park Service	1,093,009	24.2%
Bureau of Land Management	561,566	12.4%
Bureau of Reclamation	236,854	5.2%
Total Federal Government	3,591,220	79.4%
State Lands Commission	212,095	4.7%
Recreation Commission	11,498	0.3%
Game and Fish	6,109	0.1%
Total State Government	229,702	5.1%
County Government	536	<0.1%
City Governments	2,409	<0.1%
Schools and Colleges	2,962	<0.1%
Total Local Government	5,907	0.1%
Total Public Lands	3,826,829	84.6%
Total Private Lands	698,094	15.4%
Total Surface Land Area	4,524,923	100.0%

Source: 2002 Equality State Almanac

Elements of the custom of the MCD blend with those of the surrounding community, and they developed through the people's ability to use public lands and gain benefit from the natural resources on those lands.

(A) Agriculture

Grazing has been important in the MCD and surrounding area for thousands of years. Prior to the establishment of commercial cattle operations in the 1800's, wild game and buffalo, the sustainer of the Indian culture, grazed in the semi-arid lands and the mountains of the area. The grazing of ungulates is not a modern invention of white culture. Both historically and recently, the human cultures have relied on the grazing lands to provide food, clothing, recreation, and sources of income. The elevation-related climate and the variety of forages growing on both rangeland and forest provide excellent diversity for the grazing of livestock.

1 Beef cattle formed the first livestock industry. Although opposed by some cattle ranchers,
2 sheep people moved into these ranges also. After the first period of bitter feelings and warfare,
3 some ranches began to run both cattle and sheep.

4 The stream valleys were the first permanently settled with the outside and open areas as
5 government controlled range or free grass. The cattle companies, such as the Pitchfork, Zig
6 Zag, and CY controlled most of the range in this area prior to 1898. Then the homesteaders
7 and sheep men moved in, to settle the areas not taken by the cattle companies.

8 The first permanent irrigation systems were installed in the late 1870's. Construction of canals
9 and supply ditches was generally carried out on a partnership basis. These consisted of direct
10 diversions and no storage facilities were available until 1938. At this time, the Greybull Valley
11 Irrigation District constructed the Sunshine Reservoir to assist in overcoming water shortages.
12 A second storage reservoir, the Lower Sunshine Reservoir has since been constructed.

13 Livestock markets available to this area prior to 1906 were limited and at a considerable
14 distance. Livestock was marketed by means of trailing livestock to Billings and Red Lodge,
15 Montana and also Casper, Wyoming. After the introduction of sheep, they were generally
16 trailed out of the Basin to be sheared. The first sheep sheared in the Big Horn Basin consisted
17 of 100,000 head from the Meeteetse area and were sheared at the mouth of Owl Creek in 1898.
18 The wool was freighted to Casper by wagon.

19 The railroad arrived in Worland, Wyoming on July 12, 1906, which opened this area up to
20 markets that up to this time were not available. This did not change the agricultural program to
21 any degree, but assisted the livestock industry in the final stages of establishment. Today,
22 livestock is moved in and out of the area by truck.

23 The winter of 1886 killed most of the cattle in this area, setting back the progress and
24 bankrupting a number of large cattle companies. The winter of 1898-1899 killed most of the
25 sheep in the area, delaying establishment of the sheep industry. The days of the open range
26 were numbered and most ranches began raising supplemental feed. Settlement accelerated on
27 the valley floors where crops could be raised. Hog raising, dairying, bee keeping, fox farming,
28 poultry raising, field crops and garden produce have also been money makers for MCD
29 agriculturists.

30 Livestock production is the major industry in this area with winter feed such as hay and grain
31 being the major crops. Summer range is still generally government and state controlled and
32 used under lease or grazing permits. The irrigation of grass and alfalfa and the production of
33 hay is the major factor in the production of winter feed for livestock. In general, the
34 agricultural operations use sound management techniques and have done much to conserve and
35 build up the soil on their ranches and farms.

36 The culture that developed in the MCD and Park County from the use of federally managed
37 land for grazing is based on the invitation of the federal government during the open range days
38 of livestock production. The grazing custom was continued on "leftover" lands of lesser value
39 after settlers patented their homesteads under the various land disposal acts of the federal and
40 State governments. Lands not patented by homesteaders, later to become federally managed,
41 were commonly used by all residents for resource consumption, often for free. The Taylor
42 Grazing Act of 1934 recognized grazing as the optimum use of federally managed lands and in
43 conjunction with later grazing legislation, facilitated the continued grazing of those lands as
44 customary values to the local cultures.

The dominant private land use in Park County is agriculture. The 2002 Wyoming Department of Revenue Annual Report indicates that there was about 678,200 acres classified as agricultural lands for tax purposes in Park County. Presumably all this land is privately owned. This means that 97 percent of the total private land in Park County is in agricultural use. Because of its dominance, what happens to agriculture in the county has important implications for private land use in Park County, particularly in terms of maintaining open space, preserving wildlife habitat on private lands, and the cost of providing local government services (Taylor, *et. al*, 2008).

Burning has been a resource management tool used for thousands of years, if indigenous peoples purposely lighted fires to move game and modify their surroundings. Certainly, from the time of early settlement to the present, fire use has been a common method of modifying the landscape to suit the needs and desires of the human population. Clearing the land prior to cultivation, burning crop residue for irrigation purposes, burning for weed control, burning to reduce woody species and increase the amount of grass on rangelands are some of the customary agricultural uses of fire that have been in use through time. Burning of unneeded or unwanted human-derived materials (trash) is a ubiquitous custom as well.

(B) Mining and Minerals

Mining gained brief importance in the MCD with the establishment of Kirwin and the Wood River Gold Mining District in 1891. William Kirwin had begun prospecting in the area high in the Absaroka Mountains of the Shoshone National Forest in 1885. Gold, silver, copper, zinc and molybdenum were all found during that time.

Mining at Kirwin lasted until about 1907. Since then metallic minerals have not been of commercial importance although individuals “panning” in the streams of the area have recovered small amounts of gold. The sale of the patented claims to the Forest Service by the Richard King Mellon Foundation with stipulations preventing future mining has effectively terminated mining there. (The FS bought the Double Dee dude ranch as well.)

Coal, for instance at the Black Diamond Mine on Meeteetse Creek, and gravel have been mined commercially and by the State and county in the MCD. Coal production was also important nearby in Hot Springs County at several sites.

The first producing oil field in the MCD was Little Buffalo Basin, discovered in 1914. Since then numerous oil and gas fields have been discovered: Pitchfork, North Sunshine, Spring Creek, Fourbear, Willow Draw, Sheep Point, Meeteetse, Oregon Basin Southeast, and Gooseberry.

The area’s geology, in relation to privately, federally and State managed lands, as a source of minerals is both a local and national economic resource. In addition, one economically overlooked national asset of federally or State managed lands is their educational value for study of the discipline and praxis of geology and the mineral industry. Colleges and universities, as well as professional organizations visit sites within the MCD during field trips.

(C) Timber

After the Civil War, the increased western migration led to the addition of new States in the 1870’s and 1880’s. The concerns of western members of Congress shaped debates about forests on public lands in the West, bills aimed at watershed and fire protection, as well as regulating timber sales. Between 1871 and 1897, of the 200 land policy bills discussed in Congress, only

two related to forestry endured the legislative process—the Forest Reserve Act (1891) and the Forest Management Act (1897)—to become laws. President Benjamin Harrison established the Yellowstone Park Timber Land Reserve on March 30, 1891 (the reserve was renamed the Shoshone National Forest in 1908).

Timber from federal, State and private land was used as a matter of course for building homes and outbuildings in the rural community as well as the buildings for the towns. Both logs and lumber from local mills were used. Local sawmills were common throughout time. A pit saw located on lower Dick Creek may have been the first in the area. The Weller sawmill located on Meeteetse Creek was active in the 1890's, Wm. Lock moved his sawmill from Dick Creek to Deer Creek in about 2000, and several sawmill sites were located on the Wood River, from Kirwin down to the Greybull River, including those operated by Clarence Jensen, the Florida and the McLean families. The Black family and subsequently Vern Griffin operated a mill at Sawmill Pond on upper Dick Creek, near the SNF Timber Creek Ranger Station. Mills were located on Rock Creek (later renamed Pickett Creek) and at Meeteetse on the northwest side of the Greybull River. In 1958 the Yettters built and operated a sawmill on Gooseberry Creek just below the Forest boundary. Lowell Keller has operated a small mill near Meeteetse since the mid-1990's. Nearby, and involving the People of the MCD, was the Linde sawmill mill that obtained timber from the Shoshone NF and sold lumber nationally. Numerous mills outside the immediate area used timber harvested in the Meeteetse area.

Furthermore, the timber industry also provided a substantial number of winter jobs that augmented farm and ranch work.

(D) Tourism

While tourism may very well encompass all folks that passed through the area to “look around”, economically important tourism likely began with hunting, fishing and the dude ranching that started when ranchers discovered that people who visited as guests were willing to pay for their rustic experiences. Dunrud's Double Dee dude ranch was especially notable, and hosted Amelia Earhart who so loved the area she asked that a cabin be built for her near Kirwin.

As the history of the area developed, local museums became an important part of tourism, providing physical evidence of the development of the area's custom and the culture. The Meeteetse Museum District in 2008 had over 7000 visitors. That was a record for the Meeteetse Museum, while nationwide, 2008 was a year of diminished museum attendance.

Therefore, tourism, as embodied in the custom of the MCD, results from visitor's active consumptive and non-consumptive use of the area's natural resources as well as aesthetic enjoyment and appreciation of its working landscape.

Section 1.04 MEETEETSE CONSERVATION DISTRICT CULTURE

The integrated pattern of human knowledge and behavior of the people of the MCD passed to succeeding generations; it is the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a social group. The culture of the MCD therefore, derives from the combined societal fabric of the people of the MCD.

Our rural nature is such that our culture has been and still is shaped by our relationship with the land. Early residents of the area brought with them the cultures of their former homelands. Indian, Spanish, French, Scottish, English, Scandinavian, Basque, and other European cultures all came to the area, partaking of the resources, and have influenced the cultural fabric of the MCD. Their values and activities are what made the MCD unique. Those cultures all revolved around hard work, self-sufficiency, individualism, and a love for the land and natural resources. They also used the resources found here, and used them in such a way that those resources are still capable of producing economic good and social livelihood yet today.

The MCD's culture today is the mixture of those backgrounds and their heritage of use of the natural resources found here. The MCD is located between the population centers of Thermopolis, Worland, and Cody, the latter two being founded after the town of Meeteetse, and to some degree the rural cultural fabric is more closely related to that of the Grass Creek and Gooseberry Creek portions of Hot Springs County than adjacent portions of Park County, primarily due to family and agricultural business relationships.

Our cowboy image is recognized worldwide and that image reflects the determination of our citizens. The early residents of the MCD and surrounding area faced arid summers, frigid winters, and isolation from civilized society. They worked hard to establish their livelihoods, and today's residents similarly work hard and depend on the MCD's natural resources to maintain their livelihoods and provide aesthetic pleasure and satisfaction. The accomplishments of our predecessors in the MCD were made through tenacity, risk-taking and stubbornness in exercising and protecting their constitutionally guaranteed rights.

The town of Meeteetse is the principal social center within the MCD, where the lifelong experiences and culture of the rural community is continually blending with the culture of those who have lived in urban and suburban communities; where the culture of longtime area residents is mixing with the variety of cultures brought into the community from "elsewhere".

The culture of the rural community, likewise, is experiencing continuing change brought by people relocating ranching or farming operations, people relocating their home place from urban, suburban, or other rural communities, and by the day to day interactions of the many people from a variety of lifestyles and places working alongside each other in the oilfields, working on ranches and farms, and socializing as neighbors.

A key element of the culture of the MCD is that while it continues to develop and be molded through time, its heart and soul still is the active interaction of its people with the rural landscape, the use of the abundant natural resources by its people, the experiences gained through contact over the wide range of its weather and climate, and the recognition of reward and satisfaction that comes from purposeful work.

While the cultural influences continue to change through time, the core of the MCD's culture is still similar to its culture at the time of settlement: knowledge and behavior grounded in hard work, self-sufficiency, individualism, and a love for the land and natural resources.

(A) Meeteetse Conservation District Land Ownership

Integral to the values and activities that create well-being and provide subsistence, is the land. There are approximately 736,717 acres of land in the MCD. Of the total, ownership is broken down as follows:

	Total Federal	BLM. & Bu Rec.	National Forest	State	Private
MCD	432,460ac. (58.7%)	168,710ac. (22.9%)	263,750ac. (35.8%)	77,357ac. (10.5%)	226,900ac. (30.8%)
Park County	3,591,220ac. (79.4%)	798,420ac. (17.6%)	1,093,009ac. (24.2%)	229,702ac. (5.1%)	698,094ac. (15.4%)

Major changes that affect the culture of the MCD have occurred over time and include electrical distribution, telephone lines, oil/gas pipelines, and fiber optic lines. Most of these lines cross public and private lands and have changed ways in which we live. The technology of radar, microwave transmission, and satellites has also brought cultural change. Many of these developments lead not only to right of way issues, but also bring up the issues of aesthetics.

(B) Meeteetse Conservation District Culture as Affected by its Economy

The integrated pattern of human knowledge and behavior of the people of the MCD as a social group passed to succeeding generations, its customary beliefs, its social forms, and its material traits cannot be independent of economic conditions.

The economic stability of the MCD rests upon continued multiple use management of the federally or State managed lands. Tax revenue is available to the County mainly through the ad valorem tax, or property tax. The MCD relies on a one mil tax levy. While Park County and the town of Meeteetse receive a share of sales tax receipts, the MCD does not. The limited amount of private property, which was approximately 23% of the County in 2008, greatly restricts the tax revenue of the County and limits that of the MCD. That limited tax base must be protected, and the continued vitality of that tax base is dependent upon continued multiple use of federally or State managed lands. If multiple use is restricted, business income will suffer and sales and property taxes will be affected. If grazing is restricted, financial pressure will be placed on the rancher, which may even result in his going out of business. When that happens, the tax base of the County suffers, and the business income is also reduced.

The culture of the MCD would be in shambles if the ubiquitous agricultural ties to its heritage were severed. Thus the value of the agricultural economy of farms and ranches is paramount to maintaining its culture.

In the sparsely populated MCD, as well as Park County, all sources of economic support must be maintained at their highest sustainable level. The loss of any industry, at any level, heavily impacts smaller communities, most of which are reliant on one or two industries. The effects of such losses critically impact the community structure at the local level, causing loss of community cohesion and disintegration of the community itself. It is with this in mind that the Meeteetse Conservation District Board of Supervisors mandates through this Plan that all planning and management involving federally or State managed lands in and affecting the MCD be done only with joint involvement of resource management agencies and coordination with the MCD as required by State and federal laws.

The composition and health of the local economy are very important to the MCD and its residents. Planning and policy issues need to be based on an understanding of the MCD economy, and with the health of the MCD economy in mind. The economies and economic health of Park County and Hot Springs County, as well, affect the MCD and the MCD's resource, planning, and policy issues are intertwined with those of both counties.

In 2005, the University of Wyoming published “The Economic Impact of Federal Grazing on the Economy of Park County, Wyoming”, in part, concluding:

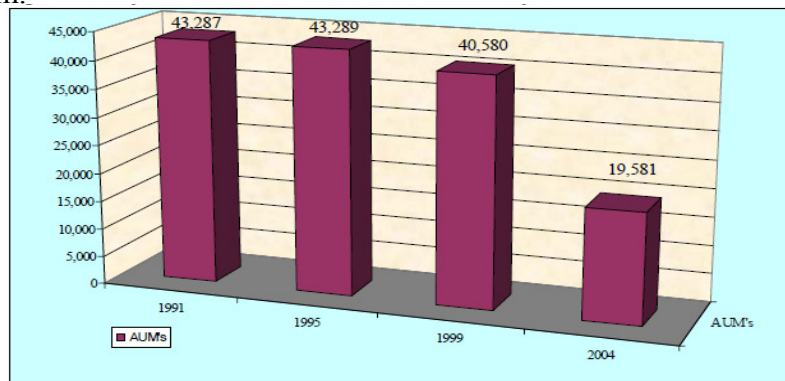
“...because there is a fixed amount of land in park County, residents, landowners, county planners and public lands managers hold the keys to how this resource will be managed. Whether the land is used for agriculture and remains as open space or is developed for rural residential living depends on some degree how these individuals and institutions react in their communities and the market place in regard to this resource. In essence, it is a balance between agriculture, development and conservation, dictated by the value society and the market place on this land resource.”

(C) Agriculture

Agriculture continues to be a very important part of the MCD’s economic and cultural heritage, and the economic and cultural heritage of Park County, as well. In comparison with crop production in Wyoming’s other 22 counties (2007), Park County ranked 1st in barley, 1st in oats, 1st in dry beans, 1st in sugarbeets, 4th in corn, 3rd in alfalfa hay, and 4th in all hay. In total value of livestock and crops, Park County was ranked 5th in 2002, declining to 7th in 2006, and rising to 6th in 2007. In 2007, Park County was ranked 14th in the number of cattle.

Based on assessed valuation, the amount of land in agricultural use has remained relatively constant in the MCD over time. Agricultural use is the dominant land use in the county, grazing is the dominant areal use of agricultural lands, and the use of public lands is exemplified by the fact that Park County, in 1997, had 226 total ranches and 111 (49.1%) had grazing permits. Of 148 total permits, 44 were National Forest and 68 were BLM, totaling 112 (75.7%) federal permits. There were a total of 831,845 acres (82.2%) of agricultural lands with permits out of a total agricultural land acreage of 1,011,425 acres (Taylor *et al*, 2008).

The continued viability of the livestock industry is vital in maintaining the MCD’s and Park County’s economy and government, as well as preserving the culture and heritage of area residents. The following chart (from Taylor, *et al*, 2008) indicates the magnitude of reduction in forage resources that can occur. Large reductions in available forage, or in access to forage, can necessitate dramatic reductions in herd size that may result in local and even regional economic harm.



Source: BLM

In 2007, Park County livestock value was \$59,000,000 (58%) and crop value was \$42,100,000 (42%) of a total \$101,100,000 agriculture products valuation. The agricultural industry of Park County contributes significantly to the State of Wyoming’s national ranking in agriculture. While Park County once contributed substantially to Wyoming’s sheep industry that is no longer true.

One of the keys to agricultural productivity in the MCD and Park County is the large amount of irrigated acres made possible by the backbreaking labor of early homesteaders and several federal irrigation projects. The lawful application of water rights for agricultural purposes as mandated by the prior appropriation water doctrine is responsible for the bounty and diversity of the MCD's economy. Irrigated acres are the base of its agriculture, including range operations, and water rights will be protected fiercely.

(D) Mining and Minerals

The MCD recognizes the importance of the mineral industry, especially oil and gas, to its tax base and economy. The assessed valuation for oil and gas in the county now is over 75% of the total county valuation and thus provides over half of the MCD's total revenues. The mineral industry provides many opportunities for employment and benefits our community in several ways. Good paying jobs open the door for greater needs of services and consumables. The mineral industry in the surrounding area provides a broad economic foundation. The mineral industry is a friend to the MCD and an integral part of the good things, i.e. custom and culture, economic stability, and quality of life we enjoy as a community.

(E) Timber

As described under MCD Custom, timber from both private and public lands sustained the growth and development of the community. It became the norm for the people of the community to expect to utilize timber resources for both personal use and to earn a living. Many families had members that were either experienced loggers or skilled sawyers and mill operators, or both. The ability to merge seasonal agricultural employment and timber employment became a cultural tradition.

(F) Additional Inputs

Not only does the MCD's private economy depend heavily on federally or State managed lands, but also Park County government receives approximately six percent of its general fund revenues from federally or State managed lands as well. These revenues "trickle down" to the MCD through a variety of mechanisms and are directly related to past and future federal lands management. Forest Reserve Funds, Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools (SRS) payments are annual payments made by the federal government to counties with federal land within their boundaries and are based on the amount of U.S. Forest land in each county and the amount of revenue received from timber sales, camping fees, etc. on those lands. Since counties cannot tax the federal government, taxes on these federal revenues would otherwise be revenue "lost" to the counties. The State Treasurer distributes Forest Reserve Funds to counties. PILT and SRS payments to Park County, 2007 totaled \$1,200,021, about 6% of the county's \$20,666,101 total revenue (Fouke *et al*, 2008; USFS, 2008)

PILT payments were first authorized in 1976 (Pub. L. 94-565, 31 Chap. 69 [as amended by PL98-63 and PL103-397]) and have undergone several revisions in the foregoing years. A detailed discussion of PILT can be found in *Payment in Lieu of Taxes in Wyoming* by Pindell et al (1998). Payments and calculations for Shoshone National Forest counties from 1998 to 2007 can be obtained from *Payment in Lieu of Taxes to Wyoming Counties* by Foulke et al at the following web address: <http://agecon.uwyo.edu/EconDev/PILT1.htm>.

The economy of the MCD, as well as Park County, benefits from multiple use policies that allow for grazing, mining, the harvest of marketable timber, the development of oil and gas reserves, water storage for irrigation and hydroelectric power, and recreational use of the federally or State managed land. Many of our industries have seen the impact of policies made at the federal level without adequate local coordination. Some of our historic industries have been forced out by ill-conceived policies. We must protect and enhance our historical industries to ensure that our natural resource based economy can survive.

Past experience shows that our local custom and culture will not be understood at a federal level without our input and coordination. The local economy as it relates to the use of the federally or State managed land is best protected by the citizens who live here and will not be given adequate regard by agencies headquartered far from our community, or by individuals in power who have little or no history in our community. This is the spirit in which the federal laws were enacted calling for federal coordination with local governments, just as our nation itself was formed with a spirit that the people were to govern themselves in a citizen-run government that was granted powers by the people.

Section 1.05 MEETEETSE CONSERVATION DISTRICT SOCIAL STABILITY

Federally or State managed lands and natural resources provide the base structure and continuance of the MCD's social stability. Agriculture, mineral production, logging, and tourism are directly tied to the federally or State managed lands. Indirectly, these sectors plus residents employed at jobs related to management of public lands provide additional economic stimulus to the MCD and the rest of the county. Any management decision for federally or State managed lands and natural resources will continue to have a ripple effect throughout the whole society.

Agriculture has historically been perhaps the most socially stable industry. Although agricultural production income rises and falls, the social influence of agriculture remains constant. Some of our social events tied to agriculture are: fairs, FFA, 4-H, parades, and rodeos.

Social stability has been disrupted at times. The Arland community moved to Meeteetse in 1896-1897, and by the time mining ended at Kirwin in 1907, Meeteetse had become the social center of the Greybull Valley in Park County. The loss of resource-based industry, especially the sheep industry, and to a significant degree the timber industry, has reduced the social diversity and stability of the community. Families that have stayed in the area through cycles of economic downturn have had to bear the social burden of the lack of employment opportunity and subsequent upheaval of holding themselves together in the face of uncertain times. The progressive decline in the number of family ranches over the last few decades has resulted in a generation or more of local youth who are now substantially removed from and who no longer have the benefit of the day-to-day exposure to natural resource stewardship at home and through their peers. Warm and fuzzy "Ranger Rick style" virtual experiences are threatening to replace the reality of actual on the ground "see it - touch it - do it" experiences with qualified teachers and mentors, peers and greybeards alike.

The current mineral industry in the MCD and adjacent area consists mostly of oil and natural gas development, with some exploration activity. This industry is cyclic and based on market fluctuations and federal policies. While adding to community stability through better than

average wages, some jobs are of short duration and turnover can be high, to the detriment of community stability.

Tourism is based on the abundant natural resources in the MCD and Park County, but is impacted by federal regulations (such as expanding grizzly bear habitat boundaries), which can negatively affect tourism revenues and adversely impact jobs and the tax base. Furthermore, tourism may be affected by transportation and fuel costs.

The social structure of the MCD is based on the principles outlined in the United States and Wyoming Constitutions--specifically the protection of property rights and the balance of power that allows the three branches of government to provide services required by the people they support. Resource management decisions have not always been based on coordination with the parties involved and many of those decisions have not been given legislative review. Contracts, Memorandums of Understanding, and other agreements found between governmental agencies bypass the legislative process, end-run local input, and significantly undermine the social stability of any area, as well as weight the constitutional balance of power this Republic and State were founded upon.

Section 1.06 MEETEETSE CONSERVATION DISTRICT ECONOMY

Oil/gas is the number one industry. Businesses supporting the oil/gas industry have played important roles in the MCD. Agriculture and tourism are the next two largest industries.

The MCD is funded principally from a 1 mil levy administered by Park County on property within its political boundaries. The MCD has had enough of a tax base to operate sufficiently, primarily due to the oil industry. However, most of the taxes are on production from old fields.

The MCD also receives direct state funding, administered through the Wyoming Department of Agriculture, currently \$17,649 for the 2008-2009 biennium, and up to \$4,264 for the biennium to reimburse certain water quality monitoring expenses.

Prior to common use of motorized vehicles, staging, carrying the mail and freighting were important businesses. These early endeavors have evolved into trucking, postage and parcel delivery, and courier services, as well as telephone and electronic media distribution that still require a dedicated infrastructure to be built and maintained across the landscape.

Agriculture is also economically important to Park County. In 2002, gross agricultural receipts for the county totaled \$72.4 million, down from \$74.9 million in 2001 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2004). Agricultural production directly supported 815 jobs in the county and generated \$10.3 million in labor earnings in 2002. The average earnings per job for agricultural proprietors in the county for 2002 were \$9,673. For hired agricultural labor the average earnings per job were \$29,088. The earnings per job for proprietors were substantially lower because many proprietors are only involved in agricultural production on a part-time basis, earning the majority of their income from other sources.

Livestock production, especially ranching, is a major component of agriculture in Park County. The Department of Revenue's Annual Report indicates that 83 percent of the agricultural land in Park County is classified as rangeland (563,414 acres). This implies that more than 80% of the total private land in Park County is used for ranching. From an economic perspective, 60% of the cash receipts from agriculture marketing are from livestock production (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2004). The Census of Agriculture estimates that there were 221 agricultural operations with beef cows and 60 agricultural operations raising sheep in Park County in 2002.

Most of the livestock production in Park County occurs on fairly large operations. Nearly three-fourths of the cattle were on ranches with 200 head or more of cows. The average size for these 200 plus cow ranches was 570 head. Over 80% of the sheep were located on ranches with 1,000 or more sheep and lambs. The average size for these 1,000 plus sheep ranches was 2,280 head. (Taylor *et al*, 2005)

The following reports addressing the economic impacts of land management and conservation on agriculture and/or the MCD and its people are hereby incorporated in this Plan:

1. Taylor, David T., Roger H. Coupal, and Thomas Foulke. Economic Impact of Federal Grazing on the Economy of Park County, Wyoming. Laramie, Wyoming: University of Wyoming Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, 2005
2. David "Tex" Taylor, Tom Foulke, Jim Thompson and Roger Coupal. Economic Impacts of Reduction in Federal Grazing in Fremont County, Wyoming. Department of Ag and Applied Economics, University of Wyoming.
3. Thomas Foulke, Roger H. Coupal and David T. Taylor. Implications for the Regional Economy from Changes in Federal Grazing: Park County, Wyoming, The Western Regional Science Association Forty-Fifth Annual Meeting, Santa Fe, New Mexico, February 22-25, 2006
4. Rimbey, N.R., L.A. Torell and J.A. Tanaka. Why Grazing Permits Have Economic Value. J. Agr. Resource Econ. ,April, 2007 .
5. A. Seidl. Assessing the total economic value of ranching in mountain communities: An overview. 2006. Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, Cooperative Extension, Colorado State University. May 2006. EDR 06-03. <http://dare.agsci.colostate.edu/csuagecon/extension/pubstools.htm#EconDev>
6. Roger H. Coupal Fiscal Base and Impacts in Park County Wyoming, FiscalBaseParkReportFinal20Oct05.pdf

As shown below, a substantial portion of the Park County economy is now related to tourism. A subset of the data for the MCD has not been obtained.

The Economic Impact of Travel on Wyoming, 1997-2006 Detailed State and County Estimates, September 2007 (Wyoming Business Council)

Millions of Dollars	1997	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total Direct Spending	\$154	\$197	\$203	\$204	\$222	\$219
Spending at Destination	\$153	\$195	\$201	\$202	\$219	\$217
Total Direct Earnings	\$42	\$53	\$56	\$58	\$60	\$58
Total Direct Employment	\$2,910	\$3,370	\$3,470	\$3,500	\$3,440	\$3,230
Total Direct Tax Receipts	\$5	\$7	\$7	\$7	\$7	\$7

PART II

COMPONENTS OF THE MEETEETSE CONSERVATION DISTRICT LAND USE MANAGEMENT and RESOURCE CONSERVATION PLAN

MCD PLANNING PHILOSOPHY

The MCD has prepared and will continue to develop this Land Use Management and Resource Conservation Plan in a manner that:

- Encourages input and participation from all citizens of the MCD throughout the process,
- Provides transparency and accountability,
- Represents a consensus of the widely differing interests and concerns within the County,
- Strives to develop new approaches and techniques that avoid or solve the problems of “traditional” planning process.

Furthermore, it is the intent of the MCD that this Plan be updated on an annual basis in order that a continuous functional vision of the foreseeable future, perhaps three to ten years, is provided to guide the MCD planning over the shorter term. The custom and culture of the MCD is defined by the activities and values of the residents, past, present and future, which derive their well-being and subsistence from natural resources. These values and activities are what made the MCD unique. The MCD recognizes that custom and culture is based on traditional values and activities subject to gradual continuous changes by various influences incurred by succeeding generations. Therefore, the MCD Land Use Management and Resource Conservation Plan must continue to be a “work in progress” reflecting changes as they occur. Public policy is set accordingly to either promote or dissuade how those changes affect our custom and culture.

PURPOSE OF THE MCD LAND USE MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION PLAN

Under the authorities presented in Article III of this Plan, this Plan has been developed for the following purposes:

- 1) To guide the MCD through changes in Board membership and staffing.
- 2) To provide guidance for MCD program and policy development.
- 3) To provide the public a comprehensive view of MCD authorities and its actions under those authorities.
- 4) To establish a more consistent and defensible position with regards to State and federal decision-making processes.
- 5) To respond to economic and demographic change.
- 6) To provide a sound basis in public policy to update outdated land use regulations.
- 7) To make local government more efficient and attuned to taxpayer needs and expectations.
- 8) To provide for and protect the custom, culture and economic well being of the MCD.
- 9) To improve on the 1994 Land Use Management and Natural Resource Conservation Plan.

This Plan does not abandon prior planning, but builds on and adapts prior policies to meet current needs and concerns. For instance, this Plan adds to the information in the 1994 Plan describing the custom and culture of the community and provides a clearer focus on public land management decision-making.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE MCD LAND USE MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION PLAN

Section 1.01 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN, 1987 - 1994

The Land Use Management and Resource Conservation Plan, 1994 was developed from the existing Long Range Program, 1987 - 1992 during 1994. Public participation was supported by financial assistance from a water quality planning and assessment grant provided by the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality/U.S.C. Environmental Protection Agency.

The collaborative public planning process used by the MCD Board of Supervisors relied on the trust and acceptance by the community, open lines of communication between all affected groups and individuals. Goals, actions, and MCD policies were derived from the public participation planning process, allowing control of the MCD resources to be guided by the vision of the community.

In February, 1994 Tommie Cline Martin lead a group of approximately 60 volunteers (both young and old, urban and rural) from the MCD in a weekend long, common ground collaboration and group planning session. Ms. Martin and the Board of Supervisors also conducted on-site interviews with local residents of all ages and backgrounds to obtain input and explain the purpose of the collaborative planning process. Over the two-day period, along with the input received from individuals in the MCD, the volunteer group created the “quality of life” foundation for a three-part vision statement for the MCD. In June 1994, the MCD Board of Supervisors led another group planning session, during which the participants assembled the second and third visioning statements, the “forms of production” and “future

resource base”. The MCD then presented the visioning statements to the public of the MCD via the local news bulletin, and comments received supported the vision statements created through the public participation process.

Edited for grammar and structure, that resulting long range vision statement for the MCD is hereby reaffirmed:

“The MCD shall strive to provide a clean and healthy environment that allows a peaceful and secure lifestyle, and culture that develops and enhances community pride, with the opportunity to make our own choices both now and in the future.”

“The MCD shall continue to provide, promote or encourage the motive and means for the optimum production of resources to enhance economic opportunity and the quality of life for our community.”

“Through careful local planning, the MCD shall control succession by the coordinated management of the water cycle, mineral cycle, and energy flow, to provide for a sustainable and optimum landscape and which in turn will provide the wealth, values and other needs of our community, within the constraints of the United States and Wyoming Constitution, and the strict framework of the Bill of Rights.”

The vision statement became the overarching strategic MCD community goal reflecting what was wanted from the ecosystem to bring about the quality of life values and evolving future landscape sought by the community. That goal recognized that the four elements of the ecosystem processes (water and mineral cycles, energy flow, and succession) sustain the forms of production, which in turn sustain quality of life values within the community.

From the vision statement for quality of life, forms of production, and future resource base, the MCD developed its goals, actions and policies. In 1994 the goals and planned actions of the MCD focused on MCD operations, water quality, tree planting, wildlife habitat, range management, and government interaction and cooperation. Those goals and planned actions were then used by the MCD to plan annual work programs and projects through the years. A holistic resource management concept/model was then adopted by the Board of Supervisors to guide the MCD in its future planning, programs and projects.

Because the current Plan derives from that 1994 plan, and it is desirable to capture the nature of cultural, economic and physical or environmental changes within the MCD through time for the historical record, the 1994 plan goals, the reasoning for their adoption, and the primary actions for achieving those goals follow:

1994 District Operations Goals: The MCD must be intrinsically involved in addressing these issues and concerns by providing technical assistance and expertise at the local level. The MCD is committed to implementing conservation and natural resource programs on the ground. Our goal is to heed local input and involvement in developing programs, to address natural resource management concerns, and to implement programs that improve or enhance the environment within the MCD. Why? Because the MCD is experiencing rapid changes driven by a variety of environmental issues and concerns.

1994 Planned District Operations Actions: Educate and provide technical assistance to Cooperators, specific producers and the young of the MCD through existing educational forums, if applicable, regarding new innovations and government agency programs regarding natural resource conservation; cooperate and coordinate wetland and floodplain planning and program administration with local, state and federal cooperating entities; support and assist weed and pest best management practices; review and comment on

unincorporated area land use and subdivision proposals; review and comment on reclamation plans; provide technical assistance to Cooperators for water rights and permits.

1994 Water Quality Goals: The MCD is committed to improving the water quality of groundwater, streams, rivers, reservoirs and lakes within the boundaries of the MCD. The MCD believes that a voluntary approach to conservation and resource management including the qualities of education, coordination, leadership, team building and trust will encourage greater participation by landowners and Cooperators. By using the voluntary approach, the MCD will coordinate and achieve the goal of an effective water quality improvement program. Why? Wyoming is a headwaters state supplying water resources to neighboring states, yet we are deeply concerned about the health of our families, livestock and wildlife, as well as about protecting our tax base and improving our property values.

1994 Planned Water Quality Actions: Provide technical assistance for publicly sponsored watershed improvement programs and/or private proposals, and assist/lead in the implementation of the Non-Point Pollution Reduction program in the MCD; provide the resources and training for the on-going monitoring of watershed water quality.

1994 Tree Planting Program Goals: The MCD's continuing goal is to sponsor a tree program. Why? To help alleviate problems caused by erosion and evaporation to help control soil erosion, energy loss and soil moisture content.

1994 Planned Tree Planting Program Actions: Provide Cooperators with the knowledge and benefits of tree propagation and maintenance through existing educational forums; assist in the development of alternative irrigation systems for tree growth; assist the Cooperators in the county-wide USDA sponsored Tree Planting Program in the MCD.

1994 Public and Private Wildlife Habitat Goals: The MCD cooperates with local landowners, government agencies, and organizations in maintaining, improving and enhancing wildlife habitat in conjunction and complementary with the other resources of the MCD. The continuing goal of the MCD is to incorporate wildlife habitat concerns and proper wildlife habitat management in the planning, programs and projects of the MCD. Why? The MCD recognizes the importance of improving or enhancing wildlife habitat to support healthy wildlife populations. Wildlife plays a vital role in our ecosystem and our local economy.

1994 Planned Public and Private Wildlife Habitat Actions: Carry-out educational programs for the Cooperators of the District on wildlife management; coordinate with Cooperators and government agencies in wildlife habitat improvement and maintenance on the privately held property in the MCD.

1994 Private and Public Range Management Goals: The MCD supports best management practices on all rangelands. The goal of the MCD is to provide range management education, training, services and information to all land managers in the MCD. Why? In order to protect against soil loss; advancing, enhancing, and improving succession, biodiversity, ground cover, mineral cycle, water cycle and energy flow.

1994 Planned Private and Public Range Management Actions: Establish the framework for grazing programs for Cooperators with the help of USDA, Soil Conservation Service technical assistance; enable interested Cooperators in the adoption and improvement of techniques for best management practices and assist in the dissemination of the holistic resource management concept.

1 *1994 Government Agency Interaction and Coordination Goals:* The MCD continues to foster
2 the partnership between the MCD's Cooperators and landowners, and local, state, and federal
3 government agencies in creating and implementing programs and policies that pertain to the
4 soil and water conservation, and the economic stability of the MCD. The goal of the MCD is to
5 continue to represent local interests in the planning and implementation efforts of local, state,
6 and federal government agencies within the boundaries of the MCD.

7 *1994 Government Agency Interaction and Coordination Actions:* Educate the interested
8 MCD's Cooperators in the coordinated resource management concept; facilitate and
9 encourage public input and interest through meetings on local, state and federal agency
10 regulation and proposed revisions; involve and inform Cooperators on all changes in
11 Federal, State and Local natural resource management laws and regulatory devices.

12 Furthermore, in 1994, the MCD Board of Supervisors adopted the following policies to assist in
13 the implementation of the described goals and actions, and the operation of the MCD:

- 14 a) Cooperate and coordinate with Cooperators, residents of the MCD and public
15 institutions/government agencies in the conservation of the water, soil, plants, and wildlife
16 resources in the MCD.
- 17 b) Encourage, and if feasible, assist Cooperators in the MCD to create and complete
18 localized and coordinated resource management plans as a foundation for the conservation
19 of the water/natural resources in the MCD's watersheds.
- 20 c) Provide and foster provision of technical and material assistance in an equitable fashion
21 to the Cooperators of the MCD.
- 22 d) Conduct its statutory responsibilities in their entirety, in cooperation and with the trust
23 and acceptance of the MCD's Cooperators.
- 24 e) Review, study, and comment, when possible, on all local, state and federal legislation,
25 rules and regulations promulgated or revised that may have an effect on the MCD and its
26 cooperators.
- 27 f) Cooperate and coordinate with the private individuals and groups, along with local,
28 state, and federal governmental agencies in order to pursue the continued resource
29 management and enhancement in the watersheds of the MCD and employ holistic resource
30 management concepts and ideas in conjunction with existing or adopted coordinated
31 resource management practices.
- 32 g) Use a holistic resource management model to justify, evaluate and monitor the projects
33 and programs of the MCD prior to, during and after their completion. The holistic resource
34 management model follows the basic precept of "PLAN, MONITOR, CONTROL, and AND
35 REPLAN".
 - 36 ○ The Board of Supervisors will use the tests for sustainability and management
37 guidelines defined in the holistic resource management model.
 - 38 ○ The MCD Board of Supervisors will cause and sponsor the continuing inventory of
39 the natural resource base of the land within the boundaries of the MCD, and create
40 information sources to share with the Cooperators of the MCD in their on-ground
41 management.
 - 42 ○ The Board of Supervisors will define the ecosystem processes of energy flow, water
43 cycles, mineral cycles and succession, as well as the "tools" - human creativity and
44 money & labor (rest, fire, grazing, animal impact, living organisms, and technology)
45 that can be used to help programs and projects of the MCD.

- The group planning sessions held by the MCD also provided the public's idea of the "whole" - (people, wealth and land) that the MCD will use in the model.

Section 1.02 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN, 1995-2011

In 2004 the MCD Board of Supervisors and Staff recognized the need to update the MCD Land Use Management and Resource Management Plan and began making preparations for the plan revision. Guidance was sought from the WACD and direction was given regarding compliance with the Administrative Procedure Act and the needed timeline to be in compliance for WDA biennium funding. The effort was planned for fall, but postponed until January, 2005 with the contemplation of a Special Meeting. Review and changes to the Holistic Goal and review of the testing questions was planned.

A work session was held January 14, 2005 to help Resource Management Coordinator (RMC), Tim Morrison, get what the board would like to see in the plan revisions. Tim left the MCD in February, 2005 and Steve Jones was hired in May, 2005 to fill the RMC position.

The MCD Board of Supervisors formally reauthorized the Land Use Management and Resource Conservation Plan with no amendments at the regular public Board meeting October 4, 2005.

The WDA continued to recognize the Plan until 2007, when discussions between WDA and the MCD resulted in a commitment on the part of the MCD to have the Plan revised by the end of 2008 to meet WDA base funding criteria requiring that Long Range Plans be kept updated to within 5 years.

In June of 2008, Bryan Armel, Shoshone National forest (SNF) Planner, attended the regular MCD Board meeting to review and discuss the MCD plan to advise the MCD as to how it fit the ongoing SNF Forest Plan Revision. Mr. Armel stated that he liked the plan and its strategic structure; he noted the lack of prescription that would require continual revision as circumstances changed (recognizing that for relatively short-term focus and specific direction, Board actions and policies would be made in accordance with the plan). It was also suggested that adding additional objective statements such as trends (i.e. percent change) and the direction of future desired change, and also reference to other agency/government plans and policy would be improvements. Following review of the Plan, the Board discussed MCD plan revision timeline & agreed that, if possible, the MCD Plan should be adopted before the SNF Draft Plan was released in order to provide foundation for MCD comments on the Shoshone NF plan and to provide the support of a sound local plan for the Forest Service to cite in its Draft Plan. Due to subsequent local circumstances, this Plan is being developed in an effort to meet a timeline that would finalize the Plan during the SNF Draft Plan comment period.

The Plan was subsequently reopened by the MCD for public comment and updating on December 23, 2009 with a public hearing held February 10, 2010. Following the public hearing, the plan was approved as amended at the February 10, 2010 MCD Board of Supervisors meeting with the added provision for developing a land use map appendix and references to those maps to be incorporated as soon as the appendix was developed.

In April of 2011 the Plan was revised by the MCD and subsequently opened for public comment with a public hearing on June 29, 2011 followed by MCD Board approval on July 6, 2011

CURRENT STRATEGIC PLANNING

Section 1.01 MCD VISION STATEMENT AND STRATEGIC PLANNING GOAL

"The MCD shall strive to provide a clean and healthy environment that allows a peaceful and secure lifestyle, and culture that develops and enhances community pride, with the opportunity to make our own choices both now and in the future."

"The MCD shall continue to provide, promote or encourage the motive and means for the optimum production of resources to enhance economic opportunity and the quality of life for our community."

"Through careful local planning, the MCD shall control succession by the coordinated management of the water cycle, mineral cycle, and energy flow, to provide for a sustainable and optimum landscape and which in turn will provide the wealth, values and other needs of our community, within the constraints of the United States and Wyoming Constitution, and the strict framework of the Bill of Rights."

Section 1.02 MCD GENERAL PLANNING

General Planning Goals: It is a goal of the MCD that:

- i. Input and participation derives from all citizens of the MCD throughout the process, representing a consensus of the widely held interests, beliefs, and concerns of the people of the MCD incorporating the custom and culture of the community to provide for economic and social stability.
- ii. Community precepts and the physical capabilities of the land (such as geography, geology, soil conditions, drainage patterns, etc.) rather than population projections will guide primary use planning.
- iii. The people, agencies, and other entities involved with land use and natural resource management and planning will address the fast-changing economics and scientific developments confronting agriculture and the other industries dependent on land use and natural resource management and planning within the MCD which affect the custom, culture, economic and social stability of the MCD.
- iv. The people, agencies, and other entities involved with land use and natural resource management and planning will find and develop new approaches and techniques that avoid or solve the historical problems of "traditional" planning process.

General Planning Objectives - It is an objective of the MCD that:

- i. The Plan provides the fundamental foundation for the activities of the MCD as authorized by Wyoming Statute and other Law.
- ii. The Plan considers how and when land and natural resource uses will affect the MCD and its people.
- iii. The Plan represents and supports local interests in the natural resources management and planning, policy formation, coordination, and implementation efforts of local, State, and federal government agencies that affect the custom, culture, and economic stability of the MCD or its people.
- iv. Planning shall allow for contributions to the Plan that document historic land use patterns, custom and culture, as may relate to the MCD and its people, as a means of stabilizing existing economic uses and keeping the character of the MCD intact.

- v. Planning shall be conducted through soliciting public input, with transparency and accountability provided through public meetings and media.
- vi. Planning meetings shall provide a forum for discussion of planning concerns and issues that may be brought by the public and facilitate efforts to provide resolution of differences.
- vii. The Plan supports an agribusiness and agricultural science perspective for individual agricultural producers, agricultural communities and other agricultural entities, and other stakeholders involved with governmental agencies in the process of natural resource management and planning in order to provide for the economic and social stability of the MCD, the region, and the State of Wyoming.
- viii. The Plan will be a tool that guides the optimization of public costs vs. benefits and mitigation of private conflicts as a means of stabilizing economic uses and keeping the character of the MCD intact by recognizing and respecting historic land use patterns, custom and culture.
- ix. The Plan supports developing and providing a means of monitoring and recognizing changes in evolving land and resource use in order to predict effects on the MCD and its people.
- x. The Plan will provide for education and dissemination of comprehensive information that will encourage citizens to become involved in working with the MCD.

General Planning Policy - It shall be the policy of the MCD that:

- i. The MCD will strive to improve the mineral cycle, water cycle, and energy flow of the public and private lands within the District through improved land use management and natural resources conservation, management, and planning in keeping with the custom and culture of the community in order to provide for economic and social stability.
- ii. The MCD will solicit contributions to its planning efforts that document historic land use patterns, custom and culture, as may relate to the MCD and its people, as a means of stabilizing existing economic uses and keeping the character of the MCD intact.
- iii. The MCD shall solicit public input and disseminate information regarding its planning activities during the process through facilitation of public meetings, and the use of local media, such as the Meeteetse Bulletin, the MCD Trail News, and the MCD website.
- iv. The MCD planning meetings shall provide a forum for discussion of planning concerns and issues that may be brought by the public and facilitate efforts to provide resolution of differences.
- v. The MCD shall provide transparency and accountability through properly conducted public meetings, accurate progress and informational reports through media, and by providing accurate minutes of formal meetings.
- vi. The MCD will facilitate efforts to bring together individual agricultural producers, agricultural communities and other agricultural entities, other stakeholders, and governmental agencies to view natural resource management and planning from an agribusiness and agricultural science perspective in order to provide for the economic and social stability of the MCD, the region, and the State of Wyoming.
- vii. The MCD will develop and maintain lines of communication and coordinate with County government in working with public land and resource management agencies on current issues and in establishing guidelines and criteria.

- viii. The MCD shall strive to capture and archive community perspective and document the physical capabilities of the land (such as geography, geology, soil conditions, drainage patterns, etc.) as part of the MCD Land Use Management and Resource Conservation Plan and its future revisions in order to provide community, resource, and capacity-based planning rather than planning in reaction to population projections or unsubstantiated modeling.
- ix. Strive to incorporate cost and benefits into the Plan and to foresee potential for conflict between private interests; provide a means for data analysis and conflict resolution.
- x. All agencies of the state coordinate and cooperate to the maximum with the MCD in the discharge of its duties.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION PLANNING

The MCD defines “administrative activities” as those activities that primarily keep the office and District functioning.

Section 1.01 ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

In keeping with general planning goals and objectives, it is the policy of the MCD to:

- i. Act to properly represent the members of the District (Cooperators) and their needs wherever possible through its Board of Supervisors and staff and to the best of its ability, especially as a member of the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts, pursuant to Wyoming State Statute and the Meeteetse Conservation District Land Use Management and Resource Conservation Plan, as adopted or amended.
- ii. Meet regularly on a monthly basis.
- iii. Hold an annual budget hearing as required by statute.
- iv. Convene special or emergency meetings as needed in accordance with statute.
- v. Participate to the best of its ability and resources in meetings of groups of which the MCD is a member (such as participating for district administration purposes at the Area and State level meetings as a member of the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts (WACD), and being represented by its employees at Wyoming Conservation District Employees Association (WCDEA) meetings.)
- vi. Strive to improve its ability to provide services and operational programs and to work with Cooperating Agencies, Partners, and Associates.
- vii. Improve its ability to obtain technical assistance from outside the District.
- viii. Provide for the training of supervisors and staff on administrative issues and support District Manager certification and training.

OPERATIONS PLANNING

Section 1.01 OPERATIONS DEFINED

MCD defines programmatic services and associated activities for which the District was formed as “operations”. MCD operations include natural resource management and planning, monitoring and reporting water quality, soil moisture, range, and local weather conditions, natural resource education, and other natural resource-related activities of value to the community. The MCD may assist other entities in providing similar activities, and participation in many technical training activities may be considered part of operations.

Current specific operations of the MCD can be outlined as follows, recognizing that significant programmatic overlap occurs. For example besides being a specific program, education is a necessary component of all operations to some degree:

- Cooperator Assistance - Programs for Producers/Cooperators
- Education
- Natural Resources Mgmt. & Planning (NRM&P)
- Range and Pasture Management
- Soil
- Training (for Supervisors and staff)
- Tree Program
- Water Quality
- Weather Station
- Website

It is recognized that the Meeteetse Conservation District will continue to experience change driven by a variety of social, economic, and natural resource issues and concerns, resulting in programmatic evolution through time. It is not intended that all of the operations programs be specifically noted in this Plan. Individual operational programs may be added, changed, made inactive, or deleted under the authority of this Plan as needed without a plan revision, so long as their purpose is authorized under this Plan so that changes properly relate to the custom and culture of the MCD and provide for its economic and social stability.

The MCD has been and continues to be a Government Cooperator in the Shoshone National Forest’s Forest Plan Revision, and is a member of the Shoshone Cooperating Agency Coalition (SCAC), which includes all county commissions and conservation districts having lands within the Shoshone NF. Furthermore, the MCD is a Cooperating Agency in the BLM Big Horn Basin RMP revision.

The MCD particularly relies on the USDA-NRCS for technical assistance and other support. This is despite the fact that, unlike many conservation districts that are able to share office space and other local resources with the NRCS, the nearest NRCS office is in Powell, 53 miles distant.

The MCD was a member of the operating group for the Park County Community Wildfire Protection Plan development and anticipates having an active role as the Plan is implemented.

MCD anticipates continuing membership in the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts, the National Watershed Coalition, The National Association of Conservation Districts, the Meeteetse Visitor Center, and the Big Horn Basin RC&D Council.

Section 1.02 OPERATIONS, IN GENERAL

Operations General Policy - In keeping with the goals and objectives of the MCD, it is the policy of the MCD to:

- i. Take a leadership position in addressing natural resource issues and concerns by providing scientific and technical assistance at the local level.
- ii. Take a leadership position in addressing land management planning and resource conservation through participation to the highest degree possible in local, State, and federal land and resource management agency planning and implementation activities.
- iii. Provide for continued implementation of conservation and natural resource programs in the field, classroom, community, and in the planning arena that improve, maintain, or enhance the social, economic, physical and human environment within the MCD.
- iv. Educate and provide technical assistance with respect to new natural resource conservation innovations, techniques, and government agency programs regarding natural resource conservation, utilizing existing educational forums, newsletters, and website.
- v. Strive to assist in the development of programs for our Cooperators that address natural resource management concerns across political boundaries.
- vi. Seek involvement in developing and amending governmental policies regarding soil, water, and natural resource conservation.
- vii. Provide technical training for staff and supervisors, especially in the area of water quality, NEPA, remote sensing, and newly emerging technologies.
- viii. Work towards developing a database that would provide a means of archiving and organizing data related to changes in evolving land and resource use in order to predict effects on the MCD and its people.
- ix. To actively participate for operations purposes at meetings of organizations of which the MCD is a member, such as WACD Area and State level meetings, Big Horn Basin RC&D Council Meetings, NRCS Local Work Group (LWG) meetings and State Technical Committee Meetings.
- x. Maintain, enhance, and develop working relationships built on honesty and trust with entities that affect the MCD and its people. The MCD has developed varying degrees of relationship with:
 - Park County conservation districts - Cody and Powell-Clarks Fork
 - Conservation Districts of Wyoming, Individually
 - Greybull Valley Irrigation District
 - Meeteetse, Town of (including Meeteetse Volunteer Fire Department)
 - Meeteetse Visitor Center
 - Meeteetse Local Planning Area Advisory Committee
 - Meeteetse FFA
 - Meeteetse School District 16, Park County
 - University of Wyoming Department of Renewable Resources
 - Big Horn Basin R C & D Council
 - Park County Board of County Commissioners
 - Park County Fire Districts
 - Park County Weed and Pest

- State of Wyoming
 - Agriculture, Department of
 - Game and Fish Department
 - Forestry Division
 - State Engineer's Office
 - Trails
- Local Legislators
- Wyoming Water Development Commission
- University of Wyoming College of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service
- Western Wyoming RC&D Council
- Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Department of Agriculture
 - Farm Service Agency
 - Forest Service
 - Natural Resources Conservation Service
- US Department of the Interior
 - Bureau of Land Management
 - Fish and Wildlife Service
 - National Park Service

Section 1.03 COOPERATOR ASSISTANCE

MCD Cooperators include all residents, businesses, and organizations within the boundaries of the District.

Cooperator Assistance Policy - In keeping with the goals and objectives of the MCD, it is the policy of the MCD to:

- i. Through staff, MCD equipment, or such other available means which may be available, the MCD shall strive to provide direct assistance to address the needs of its Cooperators as may be authorized by Statute or other Law or otherwise within MCD policy in order to provide for the economic and social stability of the MCD.

Section 1.04 EDUCATION

The MCD recognizes the overarching and continual need to provide credible natural resource information to all members of the community while honoring the contextual relationships of custom, culture, and socio-economics.

The MCD recognizes the need and importance of educating our local youth in regards to natural resources and their conservation and proper use, with an emphasis on the importance of agriculture and proper agricultural management practices as well as forestry and its related proper land management practices.

Provide education and outreach to the public regarding land and resource planning issues.

Provide comprehensive educational information that will encourage citizens to become involved in working with the MCD in coordinating with public land and resource management agencies regarding guidelines and criteria for public land uses.

Education Policy - In keeping with the goals and objectives of the MCD, it is the policy of the MCD to:

- i. Provide credible natural resource information to all members of the community.
- ii. Assist in educating youth in regards to natural resources and their conservation and proper use, with an emphasis on the importance of agriculture and proper agricultural management practices as well as forestry and its related proper land management practices.
- iii. Work with other entities (such as other conservation districts, Ag in the Classroom, UW-CES, Meeteetse FFA, public schools, NRCS, WACD, NACD, Farm Bureau, County agencies, and Wyoming State agencies) that involved with natural resource education to provide information and education opportunities to the people of the MCD and the greater community.
- iv. Conduct at least one educational function for elected officials on an annual basis.
- v. Attend meetings of the Park County Commission, the Meeteetse Local Planning Area Advisory Committee, and the Meeteetse Town Council, as well as meetings of other governmental entities to educate State and local government regarding the role that the MCD has in the community, as well as to provide information on specific MCD activities.

Section 1.05 NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT & PLANNING (NRM&P)

(A) NRM&P in General

Natural Resources Management and Planning is a category of MCD Operations in which the MCD engages in land use management, the conservation of natural resources, and the planning thereof, at all levels that may affect the MCD, beginning with the people of the MCD (the grassroots community), participating with interested and affected parties not of the MCD, and including local, regional, State, and federal entities (governmental and non-governmental), as authorized by state statute and federal law.

"Conservation" means development, improvement, maintenance, preservation, protection and use of natural resources, and the control and prevention of floodwater and sediment damages, and the disposal of excess waters. (W.S. 11-16-102, Wyoming Conservation Districts Law)

"Renewable natural resources," "natural resources" or "resources," means land, soil, water, vegetation, trees, wild rivers, wilderness, natural beauty, scenery and open space; (W.S. 11-16-102, Wyoming Conservation Districts Law)

Land use management, the conservation of natural resources, and the planning related to both combine to be a primary activity of the MCD, providing the foundation for much of the MCD's effectiveness. The MCD takes an active role in promoting proper and responsible use (stewardship) of natural resources. At all levels, management of natural resources and the associated planning are key components of stewardship. This includes:

- promoting the use of renewable resources to help stimulate the local economy (including but not limited to grazing, timber, and biomass products).
- strategic watershed planning (a stakeholder-driven overarching multi-discipline natural resource assessment and management plan tied to EPA and WDEQ water quality issues).

- improving or enhancing wildlife habitat to support viable and healthy wildlife populations (recognizing the complexity of management and planning related to wildlife and habitat in concert with agricultural activities, including livestock grazing).

Management and planning are often controlled by governmental entities that lack local connections, are unresponsive to local needs, or that do not desire local input. Local input may have improved stature when provided by a locally elected board. The MCD strives to be a governmental entity that provides a means of local involvement. The MCD, as an elected governmental entity, should provide a way for cooperators to express themselves in a forum that is otherwise inaccessible to them. Local landowners can be impacted by planning decisions at the local, State, and federal level. It is a reality that many landowners do not have the time or finances to review relevant documents, rules, and regulations or voice their concerns/opinions or attend meetings on a regular basis.

Natural Resources Management and Planning Goal - It shall be a Goal of the MCD that:

- i. The custom, culture, and economic stability of the MCD and its people are protected and served by appropriate and effective natural resources management and planning.

Natural Resources Management and Planning General Objectives - It is an objective of the MCD that:

- i. The Meeteetse Conservation District represents local interests in the natural resources management and planning, policy formation and implementation efforts of local, State, and federal government agencies that affect the custom, culture, and economic stability of the MCD or its people.
- ii. The full range of management tools, including but not limited to grazing, prescribed fire, timber harvest, mechanical treatment, and integrated pest management, are available to land and resource managers in order to minimize the costs and maximize the benefits and efficiencies of resource management efforts.

Natural Resources Management and Planning General Policy - It shall be the policy of the MCD that:

- i. The MCD will strive to improve the mineral cycle, water cycle, and energy flow of the public and private lands within the District through improved natural resources management and planning.
- ii. The MCD will endeavor to protect its custom and culture and its economic stability and to serve its people through natural resources management and planning efforts, including public lands planning, watershed planning, and USDA conservation program planning and implementation.
- iii. MCD will continue to support the partnership between the District's Cooperators and landowners, and local, State, and federal governmental agencies in creating and implementing programs and policies that pertain to the conservation of natural resources and to the economic stability of the Meeteetse Conservation District in order to protect the MCD's custom, culture and economic stability; and, furthermore, these efforts shall not be limited by political jurisdictional boundaries. (MCD, January 12, 2011)
- iv. The MCD will recognize and support the land use and resource conservation plans as well as related resolutions and policies of other local governments to the extent that

those actions are consistent with this Plan and other actions of the MCD so as to protect the custom, culture and economic stability of the MCD. (MCD, January 12, 2011)

- v. The MCD will join with local landowners, government agencies, and organizations in maintaining, improving, and enhancing wildlife populations and habitat, complementary to and in conjunction with the other resources of the District.
- vi. The MCD will strive to involve and inform District Cooperators on changes in federal, State, and local natural resource management laws and regulatory procedures.
- vii. The MCD shall seek to gain public input from, provide a forum for its people, and represent its people regarding land use management, the conservation of natural resources, and the planning process thereof.
- viii. The MCD, as authorized by statute, will review subdivision proposals within its jurisdiction and affecting its people, in whatever manner may be appropriate.

(B) Public Lands in General

“Public land” as used in this section is real property owned or controlled by an agency or bureau of either the State or federal government. Nearly 70% of the land which makes up the MCD is “public land”. This section is not intended, nor should be interpreted, as a position(s) on private property issues, or rights of private property owners with respect to County regulations. The County’s custom and culture has been significantly influenced by the relationship of the citizenry to public land, and the economic benefits that derive from public land. Notwithstanding the PILT program (devised to offset negative effects of so much land being in public hands and not included in the tax base) has never been fully funded. The MCD believes that Park County is a necessary and valuable partner in many NRM&P activities involving the MCD.

The public lands and the rights and privileges residents have come to rely on in all of the public lands, are central to the custom and culture of the MCD. The MCD finds public land and natural resources management practices are both relevant and substantive to its custom and culture, its economy, its environment, its quality of life, and its ability to protect and enhance local resources in spite of potentially detrimental outside influences.

Lands that have been identified under Federal Resource Management Plans as multiple use lands are subject to land uses that are critical to the performance of the District’s duties regarding grazing, water and erosion conservation.

Recognizing the importance of public land to the quality of life in the community, the MCD intends that policies and practices established pursuant to this Plan endeavor to maximize the MCD’s influence on decisions made by State and federal land managers regarding public land for local public benefit. Planning and implementation regarding land management, natural resources use, minerals production, infrastructure development, nearly all environmental issues, wildlife protection, plant and animal damage control, roading, water and irrigation projects, flood control, all affect the quality of life in the MCD.

Through community assessments, workshops, surveys, reports, public meetings, and especially the day-to-day engagement of its Supervisors and staff with the people of the MCD, the MCD has determined what makes it unique - its custom and culture. The history of the County and the MCD is set forth elsewhere; however, it was the historical events affecting people which brought the farmers, ranchers, miners, loggers, and the energy companies that molded and

1 formed the custom and culture the community enjoys today. For instance, the boom and bust
2 cycles common to the western states have impacted the MCD, both positively and negatively.

3 The greatest outside influence on the County and the MCD has been and will likely continue to
4 be the State and federal governments. State and federal government agencies jurisdiction over
5 public lands and irrigation water sources is fundamental to the MCD's economic structure. The
6 Federal government's program of "payments in lieu of taxes" (PILT), farm subsidies, social
7 security benefits, and other such programs cannot be relied on as consistent revenue sources. In
8 spite of the precarious nature of these programs, State and federal policies resonate at every
9 level and reach even the remote corners of the MCD. Finally, the presence of State and federal
10 employees and offices represents a major sub-culture, and economic stimulus.

11 MCD citizens traditionally used federal or State lands and waters according to the land use and
12 land disposal acts of both government entities. Subsistence hunting, fishing, and trapping from
13 the earliest occupation of man, have evolved into continued subsistence and sport hunting and
14 trapping, sport fishing and major recreational activities such as trail riding, camping, nature
15 appreciation activities and vehicular recreation on public and private lands in the MCD and
16 Park County, providing support for the commerce base of the MCD as well as Park County.

17 Access is a means of approach, entrance, or passage; ingress and egress. Activities linked to
18 local culture and custom, and which need access include:

- 19 • Agriculture. (farming, irrigation, livestock grazing, etc.)
- 20 • Recreation and related tourist activities. (motorized and non-motorized transport and
21 activities, including but not limited to hunting, fishing, water and land sports, hiking,
22 wildlife viewing, etc.)
- 23 • Industry. (mining, power production, utility corridors, oil and gas
24 production/exploration, and timbering)
- 25 • Water. (agricultural uses, industrial uses, recreational uses, power, domestic uses, and
26 general water resource development and conservation)
- 27 • Intangible Values. (historical and cultural sites, open space values and access to open
28 space, aesthetic values, conservation, entrepreneurial values)
- 29 • Weed, pest and predator control.

30 Local culture and custom is closely tied to access of public land. It is important to the
31 sustainability of the livestock industry in the MCD that grazing areas, and the stock trails that
32 connect them, be open and accessible. For instance, livestock "trailed" from one grazing area to
33 another must access not only the grazing areas on either end of that process, but also those
34 lands in between. Historical use of stock trails and grazing areas has fluctuated over the years,
35 depending on market prices, weather conditions, etc., but the need for access availability has
36 remained constant, and continues to be relied upon by the People of the MCD.

37 The MCD, on information and belief, asserts that some public lands management agencies and
38 officials have engaged in a continuing effort to limit, restrict or otherwise curtail access, which
39 negatively impacts resource use. This effort may have been done informally, or through a
40 bureaucratic incremental process that did not give due consideration to local interests. Even
41 when technically "proper" notice was given, local officials were not provided enough
42 information to form a good understanding of the implications and consequences, which could
43 result in loss of access. Additionally, the time frame allowed for local analysis of implications
44 and consequences of agency actions has often been insufficient.

1 The MCD has also relied on, and will continue to rely upon, the protections for existing roads
2 and trails contained in the Wyoming Wilderness Act.

3 Access, and the ability to utilize the full spectrum of resources originally provided by multiple
4 use management, has been systematically limited by the incremental implementation of
5 restrictions on a wide variety of individual uses. These restrictions have typically been
6 imposed with intent to provide some form of protective measure. The MCD asserts that
7 cumulative effects of incrementally imposed restrictions has led to the systematic reduction in
8 the ability of the community as a whole to prosper through utilization of resources previously
9 available from the public lands.

10 ***Public Lands Goals - It shall be a goal of the MCD that:***

- 11 i. Public lands affecting the MCD and its people provide resources, tangible and intangible,
12 in order to enhance economic opportunity and the quality of life in keeping with the
13 custom and culture of the MCD.
- 14 ii. Public lands are managed for sustainability on a landscape scale in order to maintain
15 economic stability for the MCD and its people and to provide for future social needs in
16 accordance with the MCD's custom and culture.
- 17 iii. That MCD's contributions to management and regulatory decisions be accounted for and
18 recognized as intended by public land and natural resource management entities.

19 ***Public Lands Objectives - It is an objective of the MCD that:***

- 20 i. The people of the MCD are provided access to the public lands in accordance with their
21 custom and culture in order to provide for their continued economic and social stability.
- 22 ii. The MCD shall continue to promote and encourage the optimum production of resources,
23 tangible and intangible, from the public lands affecting the MCD and its people in order
24 to enhance economic opportunity and the quality of life for our community in keeping
25 with the custom and culture of its community.
- 26 iii. The MCD shall continue to promote and encourage recognition of the need to manage for
27 sustainability on a landscape scale in order to maintain economic stability for the MCD
28 and its people and to provide for future social needs in accordance with the MCD's
29 custom and culture.
- 30 iv. State and federal authorities provide appropriate and timely notice of anticipated changes
31 to policies or management and provide information, expertise, and financial resources for
32 the MCD to make an informed decision regarding public land issues.
- 33 v. State and federal land management agencies respect access to public land as contributing
34 to economic viability, as well as to the sustainability of local custom and culture. Access
35 to public lands and access infrastructure within the public lands is maintained in order
36 that use of public lands continues to provide for continued economic and social stability
37 in accordance with the MCD's custom and culture.
- 38 vi. The MCD expects State and federal authorities to comply with existing management
39 policies and processes. Upon information and belief, the MCD has concluded past
40 management practices may have strayed from or otherwise ignored written management
41 policies and processes. It is the MCD's objective to review any deviations coming to its
42 attention.

Public Lands Policy - It shall be the policy of the MCD that:

- i. In recognition that the productivity of the public lands affecting the MCD is directly related to the MCD's social and economic well being, the MCD will directly participate in land use planning activities intended to enhance the productivity of the public lands.
- ii. The MCD shall, as is appropriate for the MCD's purposes, seek to become a member of land use planning projects for State lands in order to effectively protect the County's custom, culture and general welfare.
- iii. The MCD shall provide comment(s), seek Coordination Status, or seek to become a Cooperating Agency, as is appropriate for the MCD's purposes, for federal land use planning affecting the MCD in order to effectively represent and protect the MCD's custom, culture, economy and general welfare.
- iv. The MCD shall require that land and natural resource use, management, and conservation plans developed for public lands conform to this Land Use Management and Resource Conservation Plan to the fullest extent provided by law.
- v. The MCD shall require that land and natural resource use, management, and conservation plans developed for public lands, as well as the implementation of those plans, protect the MCD's custom, culture, economy, social stability, and general welfare to the fullest extent provided by law, including federal statutes regarding historical uses that have existed in excess of 50 years.
- vi. The MCD may, at its discretion, join with other governmental and non-governmental entities to combine efforts to provide that land and natural resource use, management, and conservation planning for public lands protects the MCD's custom, culture, economy, social stability, and general welfare to the fullest extent provided by law.
- vii. The MCD will endeavor to forge cooperative agreements and maintain existing cooperative agreements with various agencies, bureaus, and administrations to assure the greatest possible communication and exchange between and among stakeholders to public land. The MCD intends that cooperative agreements will be relied on and acted on regularly with consistency.
- viii. The MCD may, at its discretion, join with other governmental and non-governmental entities to combine efforts to provide that land and natural resource use, management, and conservation plans developed for public lands protect the MCD's custom, culture, economy, social stability, and general welfare to the fullest extent provided by law.
- ix. Regulatory action will cite the impacts to the local economy, local custom and culture, the human environment and provide how such proposed action is consistent with new, revised or supplements to the this Plan.
- x. The MCD may, at its discretion, seek to enforce mandates on State and federal authorities to consider the social, cultural, and economic needs of the local human environment in any regulatory action impacting local custom and culture.
- xi. The MCD shall strive for implementation of actions that improve the productivity of the public lands affecting its people, including not only the existing industries of agriculture, mineral production, timbering, and tourism but also activities improving productivity of the wildlife and plant communities on the public lands.

- xii. The MCD supports retention of existing access and legal rights for access to public land, and will oppose management initiatives, which restrict or limit access or might negatively impact the livelihoods and/or quality of life of the people of the MCD. The MCD may rely on cooperative agreements, the Wyoming Wilderness Act, NEPA, FLPMA, and broad-based legal precedent, which all assure continued access of public land, and place the burden on public land management agencies and officials to prove by sound scientific means why access must be curtailed.
- xiii. The MCD will utilize cooperative agreements, NEPA, the Wyoming Wilderness Act, broad-based legal precedent, and other available means to obtain appropriate and timely notice of anticipated changes in land use management of public land and to provide essential information and exert the maximum amount of influence on land use management decisions, including multiple use and access.
- xiv. The MCD shall support opportunities for improvement of land stewardship on public lands to assure that public land continues to be productive for generations to come, recognizing that it has sustained the MCD's custom, culture, economy, social stability for many generations already.
- xv. The MCD will endeavor to continue gathering public input as public lands management issues arise, change, and evolve with time.

(C) Multiple Use of Public Lands

"Multiple use" means the sustained simultaneous use of public natural resources, both renewable and non-renewable, for the grazing of domestic livestock, wood harvesting, minerals extraction, hunting, fishing, commercial outfitting, motorized and non-motorized vehicle use, camping, hiking, horseback riding, shooting firearms, and/or other use that is customarily practiced and is integral to the economy and/or culture of the local citizenry.

Multiple use management of the public lands and their various resource values provides that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people; making the most judicious use of the land for some or all of these resources or related services over areas large enough to provide sufficient latitude for periodic rest adjustments in use to conform to changing needs and conditions; the use of some land for less than all of the resources; a combination of balance and diverse resource uses that takes into account the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and nonrenewable resources, including but not limited to, recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, wildlife and fish, and natural scenic, scientific and historical values; and harmonious and coordinated management of the various resources without permanent impairment of the productivity of the land and the quality of the environment with consideration being given to the relative values of the resources and not necessarily to the combination of uses that will give the greatest economic return or the greatest unit output. Multiple use is, over time, the highest and best use of public lands and recognizes the custom and culture of the local community, as well as its economic needs.

The District is aware that irresponsible activities under multiple use management can damage resources including grazing lands and can result in serious erosion and water waste problems.

There is a direct tie between multiple use and the custom and culture of the MCD. Multiple use concepts are integral to its custom and culture. Exclusive use of a disproportionate share of the

1 public landscape for purposes of limited diversity is generally detrimental to social and
2 economic stability. The people of the MCD are directly and indirectly dependent upon public
3 land and the land's intrinsic resources for their livelihoods and their quality of life. It follows
4 that the viability and sustainability of the local economy is dependent upon management for
5 multiple use.

6 Multiple use management is the paradigm of both the USDA Forest Service and the USDI
7 Bureau of Land Management. PL 86-517 (16 U.S.C. 528-531), the Multiple-Use and Sustained
8 Yield act, 1960 authorizes and directs that the national forests to be managed under principles
9 of multiple use and to produce a sustained yield of products and services, and for other
10 purposes.

11 Congress has made it clear, as the constitutional manager of the federal lands, that in the
12 context of multiple use the general public must have the opportunity to be engaged in
13 reasonable recreation on the federal lands. The BLM has recognized this direction of Congress
14 and has issued regulations regarding motorized and non-motorized means of recreation.

15 Wilderness and other one use management systems do not result in sound management of
16 grazing, water conservation, prevention of soil erosion and prevention of waste water. When a
17 federal agency declares federal land as de facto wilderness, or attempts to manage multiple use
18 lands within wilderness study areas or other types of one-use restrictions, the result is damaging
19 to the sound performance of the District's duties, and is damaging to the watershed within the
20 District.

21 De facto wilderness is not managed. Lack of grazing and other vegetation management leads
22 to build up of fuels to a dangerous point; lack of forage management leads to wildfire, wildfire
23 leads to soil erosion and water waste. Elimination of recreation uses reduces the human on-site
24 observations of environmental dangers such as wildlife damage, erosion of roads and trails, and
25 the commencement of fire and floods. The District has not the funding level sufficient to hire
26 enough personnel to regularly patrol the lands within the District and affecting the District.
27 Ranchers, hikers, motorized vehicle operators, equestrians, fishermen, and hunters serve as
28 eyes and ears for the District as well as for state and federal agencies as to dangers to the
29 resources that must be addressed.

30 De facto wilderness does not benefit wildlife. Water resources sufficient for a sound wildlife
31 population are not produced naturally at all times. Most times, the watering technique for
32 watering livestock and for irrigating forage provide water meccas for wildlife. Every citizen
33 who uses the lands regularly knows that water ponds, water tanks, developed springs provide a
34 great wildlife show in the early mornings and early evenings. These water sources are not
35 maintained and kept in good order in de facto wilderness.

36 De facto wilderness harms the productivity of private and other public lands that adjoin, are
37 near or are affected by the non-use wilderness areas. There is insufficient control of noxious
38 weeds in wilderness, and noxious weeds do not recognize the boundary line between the de
39 facto wilderness and private and productive lands. There is no control of wildfire that allows it
40 to be stopped at the line between de facto wilderness and the productive lands that adjoin, are
41 near or affected by such wilderness. Soil erosion and water waste within the de facto
42 wilderness does not stop at the line between it and productive lands that adjoin, are near or
43 affected by such de facto wilderness.

1 With an increasing emphasis, federal land planning is creating new and specially designated
2 areas with priority uses or protections that employ new restrictions which can negatively
3 impact resource use. These include, but are not limited to wilderness, wilderness study areas,
4 designation of areas with wilderness or “wilderness-like” characteristics, areas having specific
5 environmental concerns, protection areas for specific classes or species of wildlife, wildlife
6 seasonal use areas, and wildlife habitat. These areas can comprise thousands of acres on an
7 individual basis and there is no area within the MCD without special land use restrictions on its
8 public lands. There is increasing overlap of layer upon layer of “special areas”. The
9 management of these areas through time has resulted in incrementally imposed additional
10 restrictions on use which is in direct conflict with multiple use principles. These “special areas”
11 have been promulgated through repeated plan revisions through time, abetted by the loss of
12 applicable agency, Cooperating Agency, and participating entity institutional knowledge in the
13 intervening years between management plans, and the loss of key individuals who were active
14 in a prior plan development. As stated elsewhere in this Plan, the MCD asserts that cumulative
15 effects of incrementally imposed restrictions has led to the systematic reduction in the ability of
16 the community as a whole to prosper through utilization of resources previously available from
17 the public lands.

18 MCD policy favors the use of the multiple use inventory focus on all land, whether the
19 inventory is performed by a federal, state agency or the District itself. It is the duty of the
20 District to inventory the lands within the District and that affect the District. Inventory is
21 necessary to do the planning that is required of the District. Title 11, Chapter 16 also requires
22 that the District avoid repetition and duplication of efforts. So, it is the critical policy of the
23 District that all planning and inventory work performed by federal agencies, state agencies and
24 the District be conducted together and in coordination. (MCD, 2/9/2011)

25 Congress has mandated that the BLM inventory all lands within its jurisdiction. (FLPMA,
26 section 43 USC 1711). That inventory contains lands both within and affecting the MCD. A
27 copy of the Inventory provisions and requirements is reprinted here as a major portion of the
28 District’s policy (MCD, 2/9/2011):

- 29 *a) The Secretary shall prepare and maintain on a continuing basis an inventory of all public*
30 *lands and their resource and other values (including, but not limited to, outdoor recreation*
31 *and scenic values), giving priority to areas of critical environmental concern. This*
32 *inventory shall be kept current so as to reflect changes in conditions and to identify new*
33 *and emerging resource and other values. The preparation and maintenance of such*
34 *inventory or the identification of such areas shall not, of itself, change or prevent change*
35 *of the management or use of public lands.*
36
37 *b) As funds and manpower are made available, the Secretary shall ascertain the boundaries*
38 *of the public lands; provide means of public identification thereof including, where*
39 *appropriate, signs and maps; and provide State and local governments with data from the*
40 *inventory for the purpose of planning and regulating the uses of non-Federal lands in*
41 *proximity of such public lands.*

42 The federal government, the BLM, is also charged with providing information and data to the
43 MCD for the purpose of planning, particularly to plan for the impact of federal land use on
44 adjoining, near and affected lands.

One of the purposes of inventorying the land is to provide the information for federal land planning that must be coordinated with the District as a unit of local government. The section of FLPMA that immediately follows the inventory section provides as follows:

In the development and revision of land use plans, the Secretary shall—

(1) use and observe the principles of multiple use and sustained yield set forth in this and other applicable law; (This requirement, stated as “shall,” focuses any inventory of lands on the “principles of multiple use,” not on one or non-use.)

(2) use a systematic interdisciplinary approach to achieve integrated consideration of physical, biological, economic, and other sciences; (This mandate requires that economics will be part of any inventory for planning purposes.)

(3) give priority to the designation and protection of areas of critical environmental concern; (This mandate does not focus the inventory on acres, but requires priority when a multiple use focused inventory finds such areas to exist.

(4) rely, to the extent it is available, on the inventory of the public lands, their resources, and other values;

(5) consider present and potential uses of the public lands; (This mandate does not focus on potential wildland or wilderness uses, but on all uses)

(6) consider the relative scarcity of the values involved and the availability of alternative means (including recycling) and sites for realization of those values;

(7) weigh long-term benefits to the public against short-term benefits; (This mandate requires consideration of water conservation, soil erosion protection and other conservation practices that result from multiple use rather than from non-use)

(8) provide for compliance with applicable pollution control laws, including State and Federal air, water, noise, or other pollution standards or implementation plans; and

(9) to the extent consistent with the laws governing the administration of the public lands, coordinate the land use inventory, planning, and management activities of or for such lands with the land use planning and management programs of other Federal departments and agencies and of the States and local governments within which the lands are located, including, but not limited to, the statewide outdoor recreation plans developed under the Act of September 3, 1964 (78 Stat. 897), as amended [16 U.S.C. 460l–4 et seq.], and of or for Indian tribes by, among other things, considering the policies of approved State and tribal land resource management programs. In implementing this directive, the Secretary shall, to the extent he finds practical, keep apprised of State, local, and tribal land use plans; assure that consideration is given to those State, local, and tribal plans that are germane in the development of land use plans for public lands; assist in resolving, to the extent practical, inconsistencies between Federal and non-Federal Government plans, and shall provide for meaningful public involvement of State and local government officials, both elected and appointed, in the development of land use programs, land use regulations, and land use decisions for public lands, including early public notice of proposed decisions which may have a significant impact on non-Federal lands. Such officials in each State are authorized to furnish advice to the Secretary with respect to the development and revision of land use plans, land use guidelines, land use rules, and land use regulations for the public lands within such State and with respect to such other land use matters as may be referred to them by him. Land use plans of the Secretary under this

1 *section shall be consistent with State and local plans to the maximum extent he finds*
2 *consistent with Federal law and the purposes of this Act.*

3 **Multiple Use Goals - It shall be a goal of the MCD that:**

- 4 i. Multiple use is the primary management method for public lands within and affecting the
5 MCD and its people so as to provide resources, tangible and intangible, to enhance
6 economic opportunity and quality of life in keeping with the MCD's custom and culture.

7 **Multiple Use Objectives - It is an objective of the MCD that:**

- 8 i. The public land management agencies employ multiple use management to the fullest
9 extent practicable under the law.
10 ii. Local government, including the MCD, assist public land management agencies in
11 providing for multiple use of the various resources without permanent impairment of the
12 productivity of the land and the quality of the environment, with consideration being
13 given to the relative values of the resources.

14 **Multiple Use Policy - It shall be the policy of the MCD that:**

- 15 i. Multiple use management is supported by the MCD to the highest degree practicable
16 under the law.
17 ii. The MCD will support traditional multiple land uses as a means to maintain continuity in
18 the local economy, and assure the sustainability of existing agricultural, recreational, and
19 industrial interests while maintaining or improving the present environmental quality of
20 life. By supporting traditional multiple uses, the County intends local custom and culture
21 will be maintained and given continuity thereby mitigating potential negative social and
22 economic impacts on the community in the process.
23 iii. The MCD opposes management initiatives which restrict or limit existing and potential
24 uses. This includes designation of "special areas", including wilderness, and the overlap
25 of multiple "special areas". The MCD shall inform public land managers of any negative
26 impacts on the livelihoods and/or quality of life of the people of the MCD which may
27 arise from public land management mandates, regulations and laws.
28 iv. The MCD will oppose material changes in land uses which hamper or otherwise
29 negatively impact traditional land uses in order to avoid undue social distress, dislocation,
30 and hardship brought on the community by such changes.
31 v. Multiple use lands should not be changed into de facto wilderness, should not be changed
32 into non or one-use category, should not be changed from multiple use without the
33 specific and definite act of Congress. The district operates with a policy that does not
34 favor change of multiple use lands at all, but strongly opposes any such change without
35 the express authorization of Congress.
36 vi. The Congressional direction as to recreational use of the federal lands be continued, and
37 that the MCD work with local citizens and organizations of citizens in developing
38 recreation means and sites that will not be harmful to continued sound grazing
39 management, water conservation, and prevention of soil erosion.
40 vii. The MCD shall strive to work with recreational users to prevent resource damage to the
41 lands within and affecting the general environment of the MCD.

- viii. Recreational uses that have been established in the multiple use lands continue with sound and reasonable controls to prevent damage, erosion and water waste.
- ix. The MCD strive to work with federal and state agencies and with local citizens and organizations to assure that the multiple uses are compatible with private land rights and with sound private land production on those lands that adjoin, are near, or are affected by the federal and state and other public lands within and affecting the District.
- x. That all planning and inventory work performed by federal agencies, state agencies and the District be conducted together and in coordination.
- xi. All inventories of land within and affecting the District be conducted in accord with the Congressional mandate: an inventory “on a continuing basis” of lands “and their resources and other values.” The mandate is that the land be inventoried for all resources and values, not just for one use, not to be focused on just one use.
- xii. The BLM inventories comply with FLPMA, section 43 USC 1711 and that the MCD engage the BLM in coordination to see that information is provided to the MCD for planning purposes, that the inventory be conducted in coordination with the MCD and that the MCD’s inventory information be considered by the federal agency in line with the coordination requirements of FLPMA, the BLM regulations as to coordination, and NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality’s regulations as to coordination, and coordination at the earliest possible moment in the inventory and planning process.
- xiii. Inventory data submitted to the MCD must be suitable for their purpose in terms of quality, accuracy, and completeness.
- xiv. The multiple use focus of both 43 USC 1711 and 43 USC 1712 be followed and adhered to by federal agencies, including the coordination of inventory and planning with the MCD (see subsection (ix) above).

(D) Agricultural Use of Public Lands

Agriculture is the science, art, or occupation concerned with cultivating land, raising crops, and feeding, breeding, and raising animals; it is the commercial production of food or fiber.

Livestock grazing and other agricultural uses of public lands are integral to this community’s ability to remain viable with a diverse, sustainable economy. The acceptance of this tenet is central to a strategy for the protection and preservation of local agricultural lands. Productive farmland has been developed only after a great deal of work, money and commitment. Just as each acre of ground in production contributes to the profitability of a single farm or ranch, so too does each acre contribute to the economic viability of the community as a whole. The steady decline in the number of self-sustainable farms and ranches is a response to social and economic forces beyond local control. The community needs to be aware of the consequences, direct and indirect, should these trends continue.

Agricultural lands contribute to landscape and scenic beauty, available wildlife habitat, and provide recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike for hunting, fishing, snowmobiling and other tourist related activities. Agriculture is invaluable as an employer, as a source of affordable food and raw materials, as a provider of open space, as an environmental steward benefiting associated ecosystems, and as a component to a sustainable economy within the MCD.

1 The MCD is determined to preserve and protect its range and other agricultural resources on
2 public lands in accordance with Wyoming Conservation Districts Law. This Plan seeks to
3 amplify that policy through various supportive goals and policies related to public lands. If ag
4 families are to make the investment, and take the risks necessary to keep agricultural business
5 viable, government policies must support and create a climate of confidence for the future of
6 the agricultural industry.

7 Agriculture is the productive use of land. Recent studies show that agriculture contributes much
8 more in taxes than it demands in services. When good husbandry is practiced it also contributes
9 to the preservation of valuable open space, critical wildlife habitat, and protection of natural
10 resources for multiple use.

11 It is clear that the livestock industry is vital to the local economy. Historically, the reduction of
12 permitted grazing on public lands, unless for misuse or overgrazing, has had and will continue
13 to have disastrous economic impact on individual ranches, and collectively on the both the
14 MCD, Park County, and, for that matter, can be extended to the Big Horn Basin and the
15 interrelated ranching community (Taylor *et al*, 2005; Taylor *et al*, 2004). Continued grazing
16 use of federally managed land is vital if the livestock industry is to survive. The expectation for
17 continuation of the livestock industry in the MCD is essential to support economic stability and
18 to preserve the custom and culture of the citizens.

19 The Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, 43 USC § 315, was passed primarily to provide for
20 stabilization of the western livestock industry; and the Act is still sound law. The Act
21 authorizes the Secretary of Interior to establish grazing districts in those federally managed
22 lands, which were “chiefly valuable for grazing and raising forage crops.” The Secretary is
23 authorized to act in a way that would “promote the highest use of the public lands” (43 USC §
24 315). The Act authorizes the Secretary to issue grazing permits on a preferential basis with
25 preference to those “land owners engaged in the livestock business,” bonafide occupants or
26 settlers,” or “owners of water or water rights,” 43 USC § 315(b). The Secretary was authorized
27 to take action to stabilize the livestock industry, which is recognized, as necessary to the
28 national well-being.

29 The Act also recognizes the property interests of a permittee in the form of an investment-
30 backed expectation in § 315(b). That Section provides that no preference would be given to any
31 person whose rights were acquired during the year 1934 except that the Secretary could not
32 deny the renewal of any such permit “if such denial will impair the value of the grazing unit of
33 the permittee, when such unit is pledged as security for any bonafide loan.”

34 The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1973, 43 USC § 1701 et seq., did not limit,
35 restrict or amend the purposes and provisions stated in the Taylor Grazing Act, Section 1071
36 stated the policy of Congress as follows:

37 “The Congress declares that it is the policy of the United States that ...

38 (2) the national interest will be best realized if the public lands and their resources are
39 periodically inventoried and their present and future use is projected through a land use
40 planning process coordinated with other federal and State planning efforts;...

41 (8) The public lands will be managed in a manner that will protect the quality of
42 scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water
43 resource, and archaeological values; that, where appropriate, will preserve and protect
44 certain public lands in their natural conditions; that will provide food and habitat for fish

1 and wildlife and domestic animals; and that will provide for outdoor recreation and
2 human occupancy and use;...

3 (12) The public lands be managed in a manner which recognizes the Nation's need for
4 domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber from the public lands including
5 implementation of the Mining Minerals Policy Act of 1970.....as it pertains to public
6 lands”.

7 The Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978, 43 USC § 1901-1908, once again revitalized
8 the purposes of the Taylor Grazing Act, providing that the Secretary of the Interior "shall
9 manage the public rangelands in accordance with the Taylor Grazing Act, the Federal Land
10 Policy and Management Act of 1976 and pursuant to this Act." See 43 USC § 1903 which also
11 provides that:

12 “the goal of such management shall be to improve the range conditions of the public
13 rangelands so that they become as productive as feasible in accordance with the rangeland
14 management objectives established through the land use planning process, and consistent with
15 the values and objectives listed in { Section 1901 }.”

16 The values and objectives listed in Section 1901 by which the Secretary was to be guided
17 include a finding and declaration by the Congress:

18 “to prevent economic disruption and harm to the western livestock industry. It is in the
19 public interest to charge a fee for livestock grazing permits and leases on the public lands
20 which is based on a formula reflecting annual changes in the costs of production.” 43 USC §
21 1901 (a) (5)

22 The Congress further found and declared that one of the reasons the Public Rangelands
23 Improvement Act was necessary was that segments of the public rangelands were producing
24 less “than their potential for livestock” and that unsatisfactory conditions on some public
25 rangelands prevented “expansion of the forage resource and resulting benefits to livestock and
26 wildlife production.” 43USC § 1901 (a) (3) The Act mandates improvements to prevent
27 economic harm to the “western livestock industry.”

28 In accordance with these Federal acts--- The Taylor Grazing Act, The Federal Land Policy and
29 Management Act and The Public Rangelands Improvement Act---- the Bureau of Land
30 Management is required to preserve the stability of the western livestock industry and to
31 provide for multiple use management including necessary range improvements for the benefit
32 of livestock production, wildlife habitat, watershed protection, and recreation. These federal
33 mandates can be met only by management of all federally managed lands within the MCD (and
34 the entire Big Horn Basin, as well) in such a way as to provide for continued use of allocated
35 forage by permitted livestock and to work toward the restoration of forages to recover
36 suspended AUMs. Range improvements necessary to achieve maximum levels of livestock
37 production, wildlife habitat, watershed protection, and recreation opportunity must be identified
38 by the Bureau of Land Management. The Secretary of Interior, and therefore the Bureau of
39 Land Management, is committed by statute to preserving the stability of the livestock industry.
40 The stability of the industry as a whole is directly related to the stability of the individual
41 ranches that make up the industry, including those in the MCD and the Big Horn Basin. The
42 stability of the livestock industry in the MCD and the Big Horn Basin requires that the statutory
43 mandates be followed.

The quality of economic life for the people of the MCD, as well as the scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archeological values (which are part of life in the MCD) protected by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, require that the statutory mandates for stabilizing the livestock industry be followed.

Irrigated and intensive agriculture also provide a major contribution to the economic base of the MCD and are of critical importance to the economic stability of the county. Productive watersheds on public lands must be well maintained within the MCD as essential factors for preservation of irrigated agriculture.

The majority of crops produced in the MCD are alfalfa, grass, and other hay, silage, and feed grains. These products are an integral part of the livestock industry which relies heavily on public lands for livestock grazing. Row crops, including but not limited to beans, corn, cereal grains and sugar beets, also form an important base of the agricultural economy of the MCD, directly or through economic diversity of the farm or ranch, and thus are important to the livestock industry and wildlife, as well.

Agriculture is critical to the economic life of the MCD, and its importance cannot be overstated. Wyoming Statute § 9-12-109 provides that:

“The council shall encourage and promote the development of agriculture in the State including horticulture, apiculture, livestock, poultry, dairying, and the kindred industries and including the development of new value-added agribusiness and product uses and markets for Wyoming agricultural products.”

Thus, even in a comprehensive planning and zoning statute which permits reclassification and re-zoning of all lands, the legislature recognized that established agriculture must continue unabated.

Public Lands Agricultural Use Goals - It shall be a goal of the MCD that:

- i. Agricultural use of public lands affecting the MCD and its people is protected and maintained in order to enhance economic opportunity and the quality of life in keeping with the custom and culture of the MCD.
- ii. Public lands suitable for agricultural use are managed for sustainability on a landscape scale, as well as on the individual ranch scale, in order to maintain economic stability for the MCD and its people and to provide for future social needs in accordance with the MCD's custom and culture.
- iii. The contributions of the MCD to management and regulatory decisions are accounted for and recognized as intended by public land and natural resource management entities.
- iv. Holistic management is a recognized management method for agricultural use of public lands.

Public Lands Agricultural Use Objectives - It is an objective of the MCD that:

- i. The people of the MCD are provided continued agricultural use of the public lands in accordance with their custom and culture in order to sustain their continued economic and social stability.

- 1 ii. Agricultural use of public lands will not be subordinate to any other uses of public
2 lands, yet should be managed to allow for production of all resources, tangible and
3 intangible, on public lands affecting the MCD and its people, in order to enhance
4 economic opportunity and the quality of life for our community in keeping with the
5 custom and culture of the community.
- 6 iii. The MCD shall continue to promote and encourage recognition of the need to manage
7 for sustainability on a landscape scale in order to maintain economic stability for the
8 MCD and its people and to provide for future social needs in accordance with the
9 MCD's custom and culture.
- 10 iv. State and federal authorities provide appropriate and timely notice of anticipated
11 changes to policies or management and provide information, expertise, and financial
12 resources for the MCD to make an informed decision regarding agricultural use of
13 public lands.
- 14 v. State and federal land management agencies respect access for agricultural use of public
15 land as contributing to the sustainability of local custom and culture.
- 16 vi. Access to public lands and access infrastructure within the public lands is maintained in
17 order that use of public lands continues to provide for continued economic and social
18 stability in accordance with the MCD's custom and culture.

19 ***Public Lands Agricultural Use Policy - It shall be the policy of the MCD that:***

- 20 i. The MCD shall support continued agricultural use of the public lands in accordance
21 with its custom and culture in order to sustain its continued economic and social
22 stability.
- 23 ii. In recognition that the productivity of the public lands affecting the MCD is directly
24 related to the MCD's social and economic well being, the MCD will directly participate
25 in land use planning activities related to agricultural use of the public lands.
- 26 iii. The MCD shall provide comment(s), seek Coordination Status, or seek to become a
27 Cooperating Agency, as is appropriate for the MCD's purposes, for federal land use
28 planning affecting the agricultural use of public lands by the people of the MCD in
29 order to effectively represent and protect the MCD's custom, culture, economy and
30 general welfare.
- 31 iv. The MCD shall require that land and natural resource use, management, and
32 conservation planning, the plans developed for public lands, as well as the
33 implementation of those plans, protect the agricultural use of public lands used by the
34 people of the MCD to the fullest extent provided by law in order to protect the custom,
35 culture, economic viability, social stability, and general welfare of the MCD.
- 36 v. The MCD may, at its discretion, join with other governmental and non-governmental
37 entities to combine efforts to provide that agricultural use of public land is protected to
38 the fullest extent provided by law in order to preserve the MCD's custom, culture,
39 economy, social stability, and general welfare of its people.
- 40 vi. Each federal and state agency with oversight, management or jurisdiction over lands,
41 water, and natural resources in the District or affecting the District continue the grazing
42 use that has been established in the District, and that the agencies work with the District

in assisting landowners and grazers in achieving sound management. (MCD policy, 2/9/2011)

- vii. Regulatory action pertaining to agricultural use of public lands will cite the impacts to the local economy, local custom and culture, the human environment and provide how such proposed action is consistent with new, revised or supplements to this Plan.
- viii. The MCD insists that any changes and/or restrictions on agricultural use of public lands proposed by federal or State agencies must be based on objective and sound scientific data and in cooperation with the County.
- ix. The MCD may, at its discretion, seek to enforce mandates on State and federal authorities to consider the social, cultural, and economic needs of the local human environment in any regulatory action impacting agricultural use of public lands.
- x. The MCD has determined that agriculture makes a substantive contribution to environmental and recreational uses of public land; for that reason, public purposes such as protection of endangered species, wildlife habitat, open space, and augmentation of water resources are all enhanced by continued agricultural use of public lands.
- xi. The MCD will strive to bring affected agricultural stakeholders into the processes affecting their agricultural use of public lands and facilitate their participation in addressing issues affecting agricultural use of public land in order to protect the custom and culture and economic stability of the MCD.

(E) Planning & Agency Interaction

It is a goal of the MCD that agencies and other entities involved with natural resource management and planning will address the fast-changing economics and scientific developments confronting agriculture and related industries.

It is an objective of the MCD that individual agricultural producers, agricultural communities and other agricultural entities, and other stakeholders are involved with governmental agencies in the process of natural resource management and planning from an agribusiness and agricultural science perspective in order to provide for the economic and social stability of the MCD, the region, and the State of Wyoming.

It is the policy of the MCD to facilitate efforts to bring together individual agricultural producers, agricultural communities and other agricultural entities, other stakeholders, and governmental agencies to view natural resource management and planning from an agribusiness and agricultural science perspective in order to provide for the economic and social stability of the MCD, the region, and the State of Wyoming.

(F) Minerals

Minerals are naturally occurring substances formed by organic or inorganic processes. The MCD relies on legal precedent and statutory designations of what are minerals as established by the State.

Mineral production has and continues to play one of the most significant roles in the culture and economy of the MCD. It started with the discovery of gold, silver and coal in the late 1800's and of crude oil in the early 1900's.

Although the production of minerals, and associated economic and cultural activity, have waxed and waned with demand and pricing over the past; it has been, and remains the most significant portion of Park County's, and the MCD's tax base. Oil and gas assessed valuation in 2008 was 53% of the County's total valuation and a whopping 92% of the MCD's total valuation.

It is paramount that Park County support production of minerals in an environmentally safe way to the best of its ability through the political process as well as physically, by providing the infrastructure of roads, bridges, health and law enforcement. To the extent of the jurisdiction of the MCD allows, it is within the established custom and culture of the MCD to act in support of environmentally responsible mineral production as well.

Besides attaching protective measures for the environment to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1973, Congress wrote that "The public lands will be managed in a manner which recognizes the Nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber from the public lands, including implementation of the Mining Minerals Policy Act of 1970."

Minerals Goals - It shall be a goal of the MCD that:

- i. Minerals production within the MCD shall continue to be recognized as an established element of the landscape of the MCD and a significant part of the custom and culture of the MCD that provides economic stability to the community.
- ii. Minerals production, and its effects on the natural resources of the MCD, shall continue to be conducted in an environmentally sound manner that is in accord with the precepts of this Plan, recognizing industry's contributions to the custom and culture of the MCD and the positive effect that it may provide to the economic stability of the MCD.

Minerals Policy - It shall be a policy of the MCD that:

- i. The MCD supports and encourages the continued extraction of oil, gas, coal, bentonite and other minerals within its jurisdiction in keeping with the local and regional custom and culture in order to maintain the economic stability of the MCD.
- ii. The MCD shall participate in minerals-related resource management and planning as provided by statute and other portions of this plan in order to provide for the continued economic stability of the MCD.
- iii. The MCD asserts that local, State and federal land use and management plans are incomplete and materially deficient unless such plans contain a thorough discussion and evaluation of potential coal bed methane development, and the implications such development has on surface land uses.

Section 1.06 WATERSHED PLANNING

A watershed is a landscape surface area that surrounds and drains into a common waterbody, such as a lake, small stream or river basin system. Watersheds provide useful and often clearly defined landscape units for scientific assessments and planned management actions.

Strategic watershed planning is being implemented on a statewide basis by conservation districts, and the watershed planning effort in the MCD is a local response to various concerns about water quality and related topics, and is a result of statewide watershed planning efforts of the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, Water Quality Division (WQD), the

Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA), and the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts (WACD).

Following the enactment of the Clean Water Act (CWA), the U.S. EPA has delegated water quality assessment and regulatory responsibilities to the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ) which is the regulatory agency responsible for enforcement of the CWA as it applies to Wyoming waters. Local Conservation Districts, by statutory authority, have assumed the responsibility of leading information and education programs and providing technical and financial assistance to their constituents to conserve Wyoming's natural resources, and to protect the quality of life of all Wyoming citizens. The Meeteetse Conservation District serves as a liaison between WDEQ and local land managers within the Greybull River Watershed to address water quality concerns and to investigate historical, custom, cultural, and background conditions as they apply to environmental compliance with regard to water quality standards. The Meeteetse Conservation District has also endorsed the formation of the Greybull River Watershed Plan Steering Committee to develop a locally-led, comprehensive watershed management plan to improve water quality and watershed health while preserving the economic sustainability of agricultural operations and other activities within the Greybull River Watershed.

Conservation districts may, pursuant to W.S. 11-16-122 (b) (xvi):

“Develop comprehensive plans for range improvement and stabilization, conservation of soil and water resources, control and prevention of soil erosion and for flood prevention or the conservation, development, utilization and disposal of water within the district, which plans shall include range management provisions and shall specify in detail the acts, procedures, performances and avoidance’s necessary or desirable to carry out the plans, including specification of engineering operation, fence and stock water developments, methods of cultivation, the growing of grass and other vegetation, cropping and range programs, tillage and grazing practices, and changes in use of lands;”

Conservation districts may, pursuant to W.S. 11-16-122 (b) (xxvi) may:

“Make, amend and repeal rules and regulations not inconsistent with this act, to implement its purposes and powers;”

Watershed Planning Goal - It shall be a goal of the MCD that:

- i. There be developed a landscape scale watershed plan, bringing together the physical characteristics of the watershed, significant elements of water quality, and the riverine system's hydrology, and incorporating historical land use and the custom and culture of the watershed.
- ii. The health of watersheds and quality of their natural resources within and affecting the MCD be maintained or improved in a sustainable manner.

Watershed Planning Objective - It shall be an objective of the MCD that:

- i. A steering committee comprised of persons representing the custom and culture of the MCD and of other stakeholders of Greybull River watershed health develop a comprehensive strategic watershed plan for that portion of the Greybull River watershed in the MCD and Park County.

- ii. That the Greybull River watershed plan steering committee shall develop its watershed plan in a manner that provides for its future incorporation in this Plan.

Watershed Planning Policy - It shall be a policy of the MCD that:

- i. The MCD strive to provide opportunities to improve and maintain the cultural, economic and environmental health of the watershed using diverse resources.
- ii. The MCD will endeavor to provide a forum for dynamic, long term watershed planning, including yield and storage, means of watershed assessment, and the effects of proposed statutory changes.
- iii. The MCD shall strive to ensure that changes to Wyoming DEQ/WQD Ag Use Protection Policy truly protect the agricultural use of discharge water from oil and gas development and to support agricultural use of discharge water under authority of W.S. § 11-16-103.
- iv. The Greybull River Watershed Water Quality Management Plan is adopted and incorporated by reference into the MCD Land Use Management and Resource Conservation Plan.

Section 1.07 RANGE AND PASTURE MANAGEMENT

The MCD believes that converting forage vegetation to meat for human consumption is one of the best uses of the renewable forage resource. The cow however, also provides pharmaceuticals, leather, catgut, cheese-making enzymes (pregastric lipase from the root gland of the tongue), glue...and so on.

In order to protect against soil erosion and water loss, the MCD supports planned grazing, pastureland planning, and the development and use of best management practices on rangelands and pastures. Livestock grazing is a powerful management tool for the vegetation resource. The MCD believes that high quality community dynamics follow proper management of biological diversity and vegetative ground cover.

Proper grazing management is a major aid to control and prevention of soil erosion, and flood prevention and control. Livestock Management is an important tool for management of resources. When sound management practices are in place, the danger of wildfire is greatly diminished because grazing controls the fuel available for destructive fires. Those fires are so devastating to the landscape that soil erosion and wasteful water run-off are the by-product of lack of sound grazing. Throughout the west, we have seen how severe restrictions of grazing by agencies and courts have resulted in damaging and destructive erosion and water waste. (MCD policy, 2/9/2011)

Maintaining the presence of livestock on the range, cattle drives, and the presence of ranches and farms enhances and contributes to the tourist's experience in the West. Through good range and pasture management and responsible stewardship of the land, tourism as part of the custom and culture (and the cowboy heritage) of the MCD can add to the economic and social stability of the MCD.

Range and Pasture Management Policy - In keeping with the goals and objectives of the MCD, it is the policy of the MCD:

- i. That multiple use lands remain in multiple use characterization, which includes continued grazing as intended by Congress in the passage of first the Taylor Grazing

Act and then the Federal Land Policy Management Act. Both those acts, and all succeeding rangeland statutes have made it clear that grazing is a primary use of western rangelands and that sound grazing management is critical to protection of and use of the rangelands.

- ii. Assist landowners and grazers in developing and implementing sound grazing practices to protect the resources, the land and the water conservation within the district. (MCD policy 2/9/2011)
- iii. To work to support and assist other entities in providing for continued livestock grazing on public and private lands.
- iv. To work to support the use of livestock as an important tool for vegetation management.
- v. To work proactively and with other entities to make range and pasture management (including BMPs, water, vegetation management, grazing systems, drought mitigation, risk assessment, livestock handling, monitoring, forages, livestock nutrition) education, training, services, and information available to the people of the MCD, through workshops, sponsorships, meetings, dissemination of printed materials, web-based media, and other suitable methods.
- vi. To update and improve the MCD range monitoring program while supporting and participating in the statewide UW Soil Moisture Monitoring Program.

Section 1.08 SOIL

Soil is the basis for plant life, which helps sustain livestock and communities. Soil is also the foundation for all crops. Therefore, MCD is committed to improving soil conditions within the District and helping our Cooperators learn more about soil.

Soil Policy - In keeping with the goals and objectives of the MCD, it is the policy of the MCD to:

- i. Continue to support implementation of the NRCS Big Horn Basin Area soil survey.
- ii. Assist MCD Cooperators in collecting and obtaining analysis of soil samples.
- iii. Provide educational materials on soil, as requested.
- iv. Support, and work with other entities on continuing efforts to address soil loss, and loss of fertility.

Section 1.09 TRAINING (SUPERVISORS AND STAFF)

Programmatic and technical training for Supervisors and staff of the MCD is critical to the ability of the MCD to provide correct information, represent the MCD in all phases and desired levels of land use management and resource conservation planning, and to make correct decisions to protect the custom and culture and social and economic stability of the MCD.

Training Policy - In keeping with the goals and objectives of the MCD, it is the policy of the MCD to:

- i. Provide technical and programmatic training for its Supervisors and staff in order to properly and effectively represent the people of the MCD and protect its custom and culture and economic viability.

Section 1.10 TREE PROGRAM

A goal of MCD is to help alleviate and control soil erosion, improve energy flow, and improve the water and mineral cycle within the District. Trees improve the aesthetics of the community and selection of suitable species is critical with regard to energy flow. Furthermore, MCD recognizes the importance of educating the public regarding the beneficial uses of trees for windbreaks and living snow fences.

Tree Program Policy - In keeping with the goals and objectives of the MCD, it is the policy of the MCD to:

- i. Support the use of tree plantings and the use of other plant materials to provide for improved natural resource conditions and community aesthetics within the MCD.
- ii. Proactively, and with other entities, provide Cooperators with information regarding selection of appropriate varieties of trees for the intended use, the use of trees as windbreaks and living snow fences, proper techniques of tree planting and maintenance, irrigation systems, program funding, wildlife interactions, and sources of trees through the MCD website, printed materials, educational workshops, and such other methods as may be appropriate.

Section 1.11 WATER QUALITY

The MCD remains committed to the goal of maintaining, and improving where appropriate, the water quality of groundwater, streams, rivers, reservoirs and lakes within the boundaries of the District.

An MCD objective is effective local management of water quality and the watershed, making improvements where and when possible.

Water Quality Policy - In keeping with the goals and objectives of the MCD, it is the policy of the MCD to:

- i. Continue to provide leadership for watershed planning, management, and improvement programs within the MCD and the State, as funding and time allows, supporting a voluntary approach to conservation and resource management including: education, coordination and cooperation, leadership, team building, and trust.
- ii. Encourage continued participation by landowners, producers, and other entities in maintaining and improving the water quality within the District in order to preserve the custom and culture and economic viability of the MCD from disruption from outside interests.
- iii. Join with other agencies and organizations in order to build a coalition that has broad-based strength to provide for water quality regulations that reflect and respect local or regional differences and needs in order that the MCD custom and culture and economic viability are not violated by interests far removed from the waters of the MCD.
- iv. Provide technical assistance and information to Cooperators on practices that could benefit water quality, including improved irrigation efficiency, flood water management, Best Management Practices (BMPs), and residential septic systems.

- v. Continue to facilitate development of a comprehensive watershed plan on the Greybull River Watershed by a local steering committee under the joint auspices of the WDA, the WACD, and the Wyoming DEQ/WQD.
- vi. Conduct water quality monitoring of appropriate parameters in accordance with statutes and regulations in order to assist individual cooperators, build a database of baseline information, assess conditions on the impaired portion of the Greybull River, and provide sound scientific information for watershed planning efforts to benefit the social stability and economic viability of the MCD.

Section 1.12 WEATHER STATION

Wyoming's weather not only changes frequently, but quickly - both temporally and spatially. Furthermore, prediction is difficult and weather stations are widely spaced. The District realizes that weather is a crucial factor in ranch and farm management. Current updates on weather conditions and accurate weather data can be invaluable to range, irrigation, and wildlife habitat management. MCD also recognizes that the general public is interested in local weather, such as inches of rainfall or snowfall, low and high temperature, and barometric pressure. Combined with soil moisture information, Meeteetse's weather will help Wyoming's State Climatologist with drought forecasting and reports. Our weather data also helps the National Weather Service out of Riverton, Wyoming with "watches and warnings" and forecasting.

Weather Station Policy - In keeping with the goals and objectives of the MCD, it is the policy of the MCD to:

Be a provider of weather information and data from within the MCD to the public and to governmental and non-governmental organizations such as NOAA, the Citizen Weather Observation Program, and the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow Study network (CoCoRaHS).

Section 1.13 WEBSITE

The MCD website: <http://www.meeteetsecd-wy.gov> is a primary means of communication and education for the District.

Website Policy - In keeping with the goals and objectives of the MCD, it is the policy of the MCD to:

- i. Be a provider of web based information from and regarding the MCD such as:

Weather	Current topics	Range and Soil moisture
MCD <i>Trail News</i>	Calendar	Links to regulations
Current work & projects	Water quality information	Assistance MCD provides
MCD Annual Report	MCD Plan of Work	MCD draft meeting agenda
MCD's Goals and Policies	NRCS Information	Fire Information
Links to related sites	Education	MCD's LUMRCP
Greybull River Watershed Plan Information		

DEFINITIONS

Since this Plan deals with how laws are applied in the MCD, the meaning of several terms must be understood when reading federal and State statutes and regulations. Congress and the State Legislature enact federal and State statutes respectively. Those statutes can only be amended or abolished by the body that enacted them. Regulations are promulgated by the various executive agencies to carry out the intent of statutes. The following terms are often used in statutes and promulgated regulations.

For the purposes of this Land Use Management and Resource Conservation Plan, the following definitions apply:

“Adjudicated” means adjudged; tried and decided. (American Dictionary Of The English Language, Noah Webster 1828)

“Ad valorem tax” means a property tax based on the assessed value of the property. (W.S. 39-13-101)

“Affected party” means:

1) Meeteetse Conservation District and/or its individual citizen(s) who is, or will be, directly affected by an agency proposed action or the action itself; and

2) An owner of land, holder of property rights, or lessee of lands or federal permittee on lands within the political boundaries of the MCD, who is or will be, directly affected by an agency proposed action or the action itself.

“Ag” means an abbreviation for agriculture (n.) or agricultural (adj.).

"Agency" means any authority, bureau, board, commission, department, division, officer or employee of the state, a county, city or town or other political subdivision of the state, except the governing body of a city or town, the state legislature, the University of Wyoming and the judiciary (W.S. 16-3-101)

“Agriculture” means the science, art, or occupation concerned with cultivating the soil, raising crops, and raising livestock. (Webster’s II New College Dictionary, p. 478, 1995). It is the feeding, breeding, and raising animals; it is the commercial production of food or fiber.

“Allotment management plan (AMP)” means a document prepared in consultation with the lessees or permittees involved, which applies to livestock operations on the public lands or on lands within National Forests in the eleven contiguous Western States and which:

1) Prescribes the manner in, and extent to, which livestock operations will be conducted in order to meet the multiple-use, sustained-yield, economic and other needs and objectives as determined for the lands by the Secretary concerned; and

2) Describes the type, location, ownership, and general specifications for the range improvements to be installed and maintained on the lands to meet the livestock grazing and other objectives of land management; and

3) Contains such other provisions relating to livestock grazing and other objectives found by the Secretary concerned to be consistent with the provisions of this Act and other applicable law. (43 U.S.C 1702(k))

1 “Animal Unit Month” (AUM) means the amount of forage necessary for the sustenance of one
2 cow or its equivalent for a period of 1 month. (43CFR4100.0-5)

3 BLM regulation - 43CFR4130.8-1(a)(2)(c) “Except as provided in Sec. 4130.5, the full
4 fee shall be charged for each animal unit month of authorized grazing use. For
5 the purposes of calculating the fee, an animal unit month is defined as a month's
6 use and occupancy of range by 1 cow, bull, steer, heifer, horse, burro, mule, 5
7 sheep, or 5 goats, over the age of 6 months at the time of entering the public
8 lands or other lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management; by any
9 such weaned animals regardless of age; and by such animals that will become 12
10 months of age during the authorized period of use. No charge shall be made for
11 animals under 6 months of age, at the time of entering public lands or other
12 lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management, that are the natural
13 progeny of animals upon which fees are paid, provided they will not become 12
14 months of age during the authorized period of use, nor for progeny born during
15 that period. In calculating the billing the grazing fee is prorated on a daily basis
16 and charges are rounded to reflect the nearest whole number of animal unit
17 months.”

18 “Head month” is a term used by Forest Service. A head month is a month's use and
19 occupancy of range by one animal, except for sheep or goats. A full head
20 month's fee is charged for a month of grazing by adult animals; if the grazing
21 animal is weaned or 6 months of age or older at the time of entering National
22 Forest System lands; or will become 12 months of age during the permitted
23 period of use. For fee purposes 5 sheep or goats, weaned or adult, are equivalent
24 to one cow, bull, steer, heifer, horse, or mule. (36CFR222.50(c))

25 “Board” means the Meeteetse Conservation District Board of Supervisors. See “Notify”

26 "Commission" or "state conservation commission" means the state board of agriculture. (W.S.
27 11-16-102, Wyoming Conservation Districts Law)

28 “Common Sense” means sound practical judgment; that degree of intelligence and reason, as
29 exercised upon the relations of persons and things and the ordinary affairs of life which
30 is possessed by the generality of mankind and which would suffice to direct the conduct
31 and actions of the individual in a manner to agree with the behavior of ordinary persons.
32 (Black’s Law Dictionary, 5th Ed., p. 250)

33 “Consensus” means general or widespread agreement among the members of a group with an
34 additional underlying agreement by the dissenters not to oppose.

35 "Conservation" means development, improvement, maintenance, preservation, protection and
36 use of natural resources, and the control and prevention of floodwater and sediment
37 damages, and the disposal of excess waters. (W.S. 11-16-102, Wyoming Conservation
38 Districts Law)

39 “Consistent” means marked by harmony, regularity, or steady continuity: free from variation or
40 contradiction. (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, Deluxe Edition (1998), p.
41 386)

42 “Consistency” means agreement or harmony of parts or features to one another or a whole:
43 *specifically*: ability to be asserted together without contradiction. (Merriam-Webster’s
44 Collegiate Dictionary, Deluxe Edition (1998), p. 386)

1 “Consult” means the act of asking the advice or opinion of someone. (Black’s Law Dictionary
2 Deluxe 7th ed., p. 311)

3 “Consultation, Cooperation, and Coordination” means to solicit the advice or opinion of, in the
4 spirit of working with, and without subordination of the affected party.

5 “Cooperate” means to act or work with another or others: act together. (Merriam-Webster’s
6 Collegiate Dictionary, Deluxe Edition (1998), p. 399)

7 “Collaborationism” means the advocacy or practice of collaboration with an enemy. (Merriam-
8 Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, Deluxe Edition (1998), p. 351)

9 ”Coordinate” means

10 1) equal, of the same rank, order, degree or importance; not subordinate. (Black’s Law
11 Dictionary, 5th edition, p. 303), or

12 2) *n.* One that is equal in rank, degree, or importance. *tv.* To place in the same order,
13 class, or rank. *adj.* of equal importance, rank, or degree. (Webster’s II New College
14 Dictionary (1995) p. 248)

15 “Coordination” means the act of coordinating or the state of being coordinate. (Webster’s II
16 New College Dictionary (1995) p. 248)

17 “Commission” means the Park County Board of County Commissioners.

18 “County managed lands” means:

19 1) Lands and natural resources that fall under Park County management.

20 2) Lands and natural resources that fall under the management of a county other than
21 Park.

22 “Credible science” means knowledge covering general truths or the operation of general laws
23 especially as obtained and tested through scientific method. The practice of reaching
24 solutions to resource problems through the use of scientific methods and conclusive
25 factual data rather than by consensus or popular vote.

26 "Custom" means a practice that by its common adoption and long, unvarying habit has come to
27 have the force of law. (Black’s Law Dictionary, Deluxe 7th edition, p. 390)

28 “Culture” means the integrated pattern of human knowledge and behavior passed to succeeding
29 generations; it is the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a social
30 group. (Webster’s 9th New Collegiate Dictionary, 1991, p. 314)

31 "District" or "conservation district" means a governmental subdivision of this state, and a
32 public body corporate and politic, organized in accordance with W.S. 11-16-102,
33 Wyoming Conservation Districts Law.

34 “Economic Viability” means the condition of a society, and/or community, to be economically
35 capable of working, functioning, growing, developing, and prospering as an
36 independent unit. It is a critical component of social and community stability.

37 “Federally or State managed lands” means lands and natural resources that fall under federal or
38 State management, including, but not limited to, the National Forest System (Reserves,
39 National Forest, Wilderness, Wild and Scenic); Bureau of Land Management lands
40 (including wilderness study areas and areas of critical concern); Bureau of Reclamation
41 lands; State School lands and other State trust lands (including Game and Fish lands).

1 “Goal” means:

2 1) As it relates to land use, a desired condition. Historical land use of the majority of
3 the land in a region shall be a determining factor in defining goals. (W.S. 9-8-102

4 2) As it relates to planning, the objective towards which an endeavor is directed.
5 (Webster’s II New College Dictionary, p. 478, 1995)

6 “Guidelines” means a checklist of methods through which a land use policy is established.
7 (W.S. 9-8-102(v))

8 "Local agency" means any agency with responsibilities limited to less than statewide
9 jurisdiction, except the governing body of a city or town. (W.S. 16-3-101 (b))

10 “Local Government” means

11 1) Any county, city, or town, or any combination of the above as formed under the
12 provisions of the Wyoming Joint Powers Act. (W.S. 9-8-102); and

13 2) Any political subdivision of the State and any general purpose unit of local
14 government with resource planning, resource management, zoning, or land use
15 regulation authority. (43 CFR 1610.05(e))

16 “Land Use Planning” means the process which guides the growth and development of an area
17 and assures the best and wisest use of that area’s resources now and in the future. (W.S.
18 9-8-102)

19 “Local Land Use Plan” means any written statement of land use policies, goals, and objectives
20 adopted by local governments. Such plans shall relate to an explanation of the method
21 of implementation, however, these plans shall not require any provisions for zoning.
22 Any local Land Use Plan may contain maps, graphs, charts, illustrations, or any other
23 form of written or visual communication. (W.S. 9-8-102)

24 “Land Use Management and Resource Conservation Plan” means “Land Use and Natural
25 Resource Management Plan”

26 “Meeteetse Conservation District” means:

27 1) The Meeteetse Conservation District Board of Supervisors; and

28 2) The lands within the political boundary of the jurisdiction of the Meeteetse
29 Conservation District Board of Supervisors.

30 “May” means the discretion or choice between two or more alternatives. (Black’s Law
31 Dictionary, 5th edition, p. 883)

32 “Multiple use” means the sustained simultaneous use of public natural resources, both
33 renewable and non-renewable, for the grazing of domestic livestock, wood harvesting,
34 minerals extraction, hunting, fishing, commercial outfitting, motorized and non-
35 motorized vehicle use, camping, hiking, horseback riding, shooting firearms, and/or
36 other use that is customarily practiced and is integral to the economy and/or culture of
37 the local citizenry.

38 "Natural resources" or "resources," means land, soil, water, vegetation, trees, wild rivers,
39 wilderness, natural beauty, scenery and open space; (W.S. 11-16-102, Wyoming
40 Conservation Districts Law)

1 “Natural Resources Planning Committee (NRPC)” means a County Natural Resources Planning
2 Committee as duly authorized by a Board of County Commissioners under a statutory
3 authority.

4 “Natural right” means a right that is conceived as part of natural law and that is therefore
5 thought to exist independently of rights created by government or society, such as the
6 right to life, liberty, and property. (Black’s Law Dictionary Deluxe 7th ed., p. 1323)

7
8 “Notify” means, for the purposes of this plan, official notification, which shall be constituted
9 by delivery of information documents to the attention of the Chairman of the Meeteetse
10 Conservation District Board of Supervisors, P.O. Box 237, 2103 State Street,
11 Meeteetse, WY 82433.

12 “Objective” means a desired level of achievement or measurable step towards achievement of a
13 goal. (W.S. 9-8-102)

14 “Permit” means a certificate evidencing permission; a license. (Black’s Law Dictionary Deluxe
15 7th ed., p. 1160)

16 “Policy” means the method that should be applied to obtain a desired goal. (W.S. 9-8-102)

17 “Practicable” means capable of being done: FEASIBLE. Usage: “*Practicable* refers to
18 something that can be put into effect. *Practical* refers to something that is also sensible
19 and worthwhile. Thus, it might be practicable to transport children to school by balloon,
20 but it would not be practical.” (Webster’s II New College Dictionary (1995) p. 867)

21 “Principal or major uses” includes, and is limited to, domestic livestock grazing, fish and
22 wildlife development and utilization, mineral exploration and production, rights-of-way,
23 outdoor recreation, and timber production. (43 U.S.C 1702(l))

24 “Private property” means property – protected from public appropriation – over which the
25 owner has exclusive and absolute rights. (Black’s Law Dictionary Deluxe 7th ed., p.
26 1233)

27 “Property” means any external thing over which the rights of possession, use, and enjoyment
28 are exercised. (Black’s Law Dictionary Deluxe 7th ed., p. 1232)

29 “Property right” means a right to specific property, whether tangible or intangible. (Black’s
30 Law Dictionary Deluxe 7th ed., p. 1323)

31 “Public lands” means those lands held by the federal or State government with full respect and
32 consideration given to any and all privately held rights attached thereto.

33 “Public property” means nation, State or community owned property not restricted to any one
34 individual’s use or possession. (Black’s Law Dictionary Deluxe 7th ed., p. 1233)

35 “Renewable natural resources,” “natural resources” or “resources,” means land, soil, water,
36 vegetation, trees, wild rivers, wilderness, natural beauty, scenery and open space; (W.S.
37 11-16-102, Wyoming Conservation Districts Law)

38 “Resolution” or “County Resolution” means:

39 1) A formal expression of a decision by a county board of county commissioners, which
40 carries the force and effect of law, similar to that authority of a city ordinance;

2) A formal expression of a decision by the Park County Board of County Commissioners which carries the force and effect of law, similar to that authority of a city ordinance; and

3) A formal expression of a decision by a conservation district Board of Supervisors.

"Registrar of rules" for local agency rules means the county clerk of the county in which the rule is to be effective. (W.S. 16-3-101 (b))

"Right" means the interest, claim, or ownership that one has in tangible or intangible property. (Black's Law Dictionary Deluxe 7th ed., p. 1322)

"Riparian" means

1) Of, on, or relating to the banks of a natural course of water. (American Heritage Dictionary 4th ed.)

2) Of, on, or relating to the banks of a natural course of water and having dependency on ground water derived from that water course.

"Rule" means each agency statement of general applicability that implements, interprets and prescribes law, policy or ordinances of cities and towns, or describes the organization, procedures, or practice requirements of any agency. (W.S. 16-3-101 (b))

"Secretary" means the Secretary of Agriculture and/or the Secretary of Interior, or their delegates.

"Shall" means imperative or mandatory. It excludes the idea of discretion. (Black's Law Dictionary, 5th edition, p. 1233)

"Social Stability" means the condition of a society and/or community being firmly established, permanent and steadfast, not subject to insecurity, emotional illness, or outside disruption, and with the strength to stand and endure in its established way of life.

"Sustain(ed)" means to nourish and encourage; lend strength to. (Black's Law Dictionary Deluxe 7th ed., p. 1322)

"Sustained yield" means the achievement and maintenance in perpetuity of a high-level annual or regular periodic output of the various renewable resources of the public lands consistent with multiple use. (43 U.S.C 1702(h))

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11-16-101. Short title.
This act may be cited as the "Wyoming Conservation Districts Law."

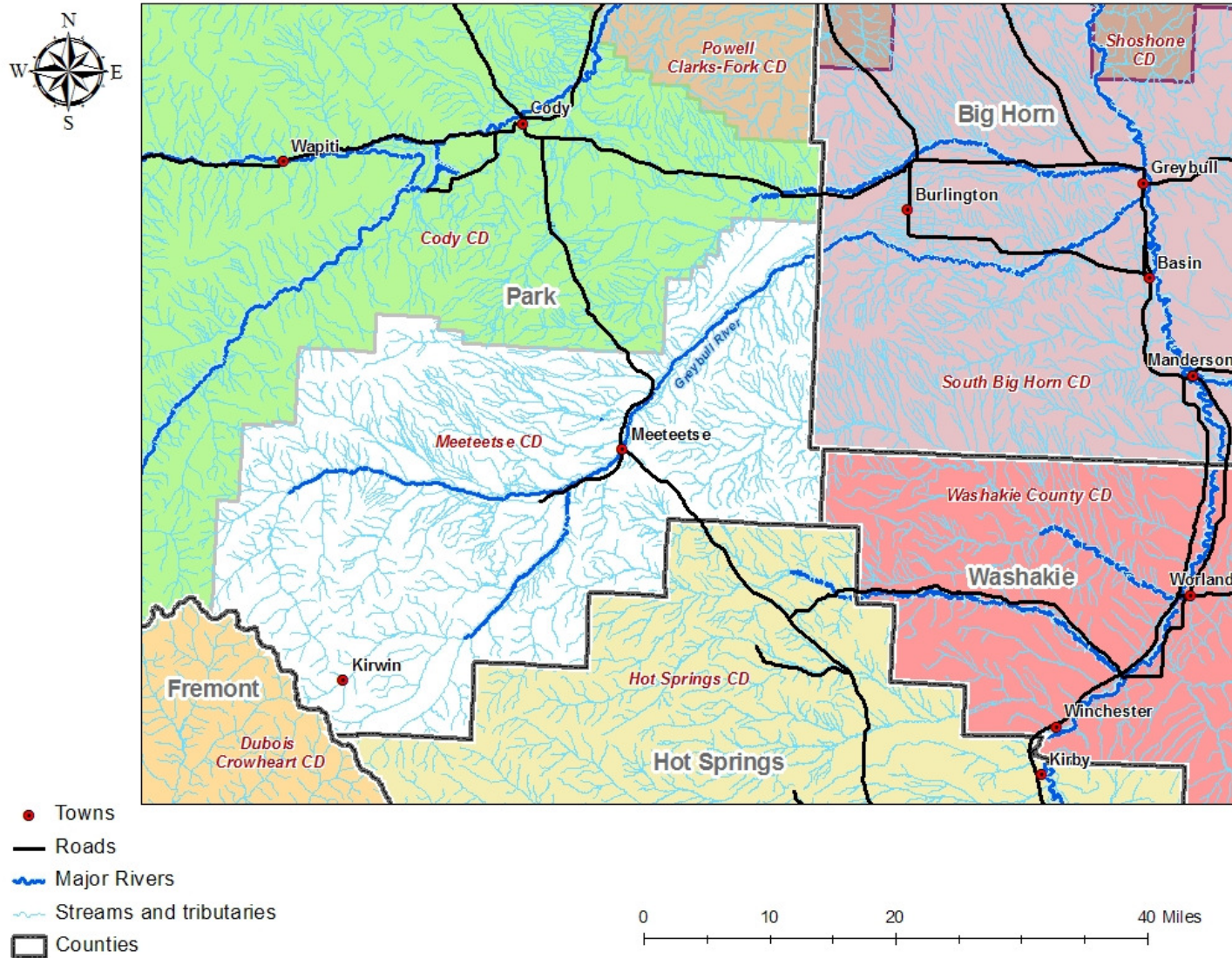
11-16-102. Definitions.
(a) As used in this act:
(iv) "Conservation" means development, improvement, maintenance, preservation, protection and use of natural resources, and the control and prevention of floodwater and sediment damages, and the disposal of excess waters;
(x) "Renewable natural resources," "natural resources" or "resources," means land, soil, water, vegetation, trees, wild rivers, wilderness, natural beauty, scenery and open space;

11-16-103. Legislative declarations and policy.
(a) It is hereby declared that the farm and grazing lands of Wyoming are among the basic assets of the state; that improper land use practices cause and contribute to serious erosion of these lands by wind and water; that among the consequences which would result from such conditions are the deterioration of soil and its fertility and the silting and sedimentation of stream channels, reservoirs, dams and ditches; that to conserve soil, and soil and water resources, and prevent and control soil erosion, it is necessary that land use practices contributing to soil erosion be discouraged and that appropriate soil conserving land use practices be adopted.
(b) It is hereby declared to be the policy of the legislature to provide for the conservation of the soil, and soil and water resources of this state, and for the control and prevention of soil erosion and for flood prevention or the conservation, development, utilization, and disposal of water, and thereby to stabilize ranching and farming operations, to preserve natural resources, protect the tax base, control floods, prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs, preserve wildlife, protect public lands, and protect and promote the health, safety and general welfare of the people of this state.

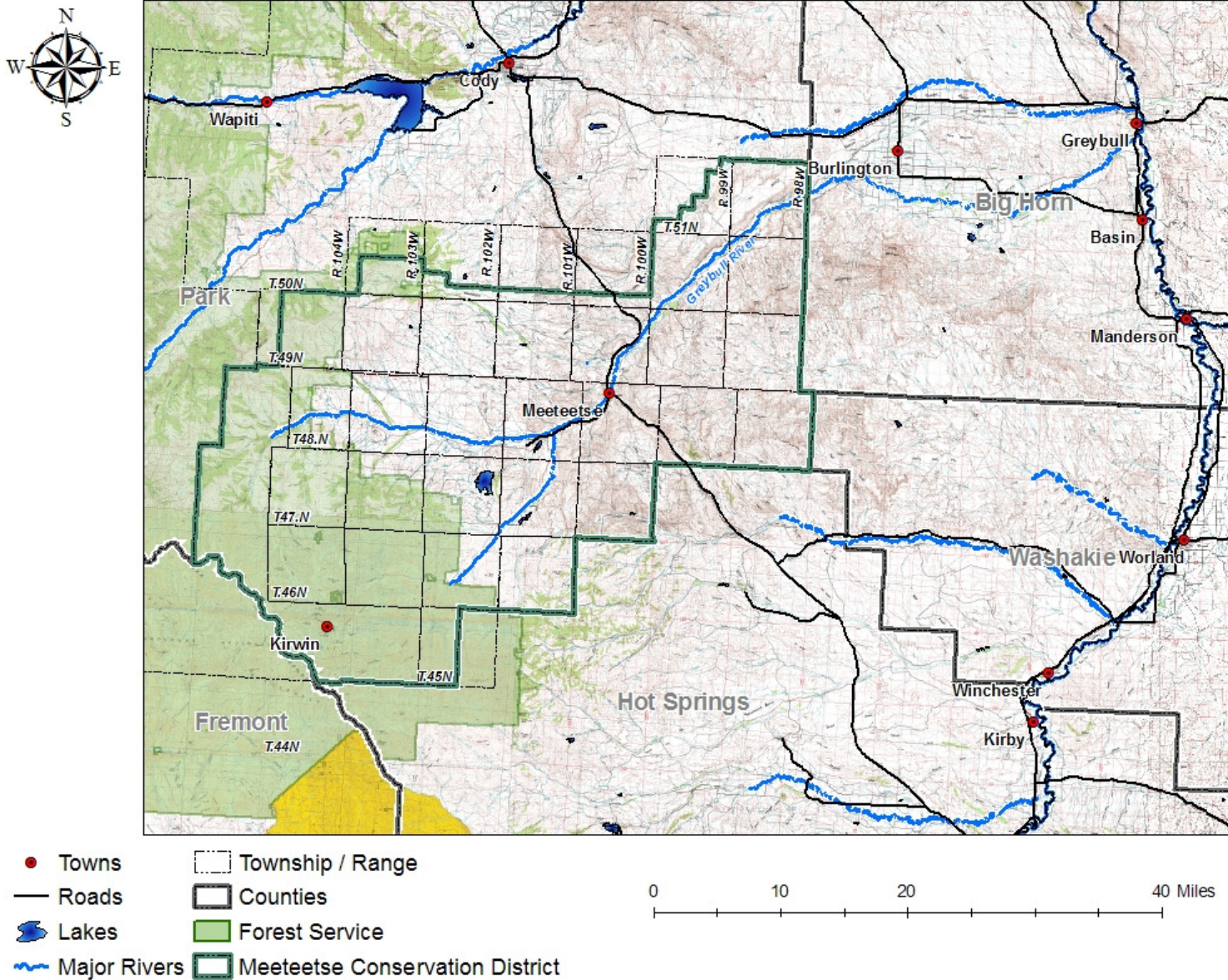
11-16-121. District supervisor; cooperation and agreements between districts; agreements with districts in adjoining states.
(a) The supervisors of two (2) or more districts organized under this act may cooperate in the exercise of any or all powers conferred in this act.
(b) Any two (2) or more districts may engage in joint activities by agreement for planning, financing, constructing, operating, maintaining and administering any program or project concerned with the conservation of renewable natural resources. The districts concerned may make available for purposes of the agreement any funds, property, personnel, equipment or services available to them under this act.

1

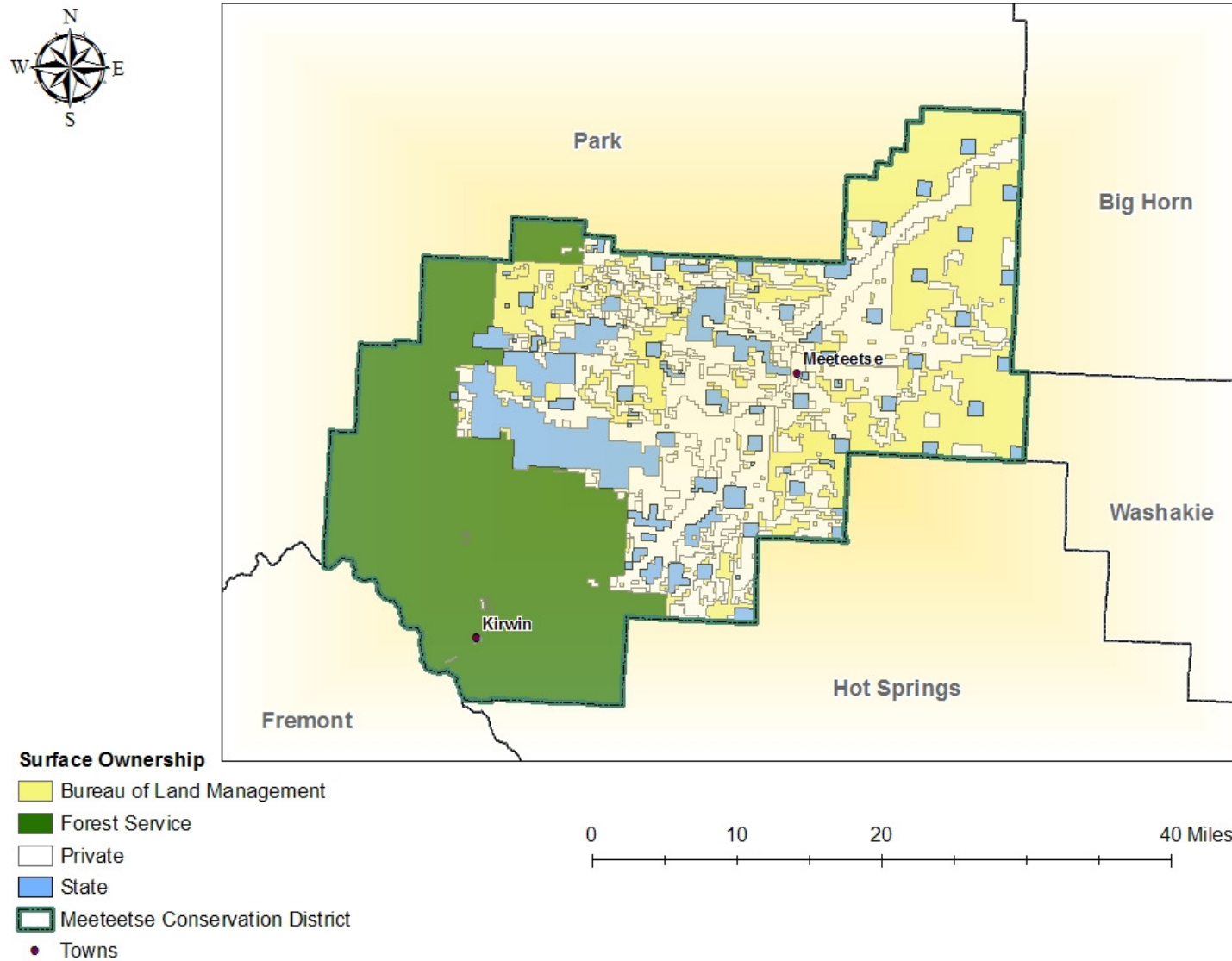
APPENDIX - MAPS



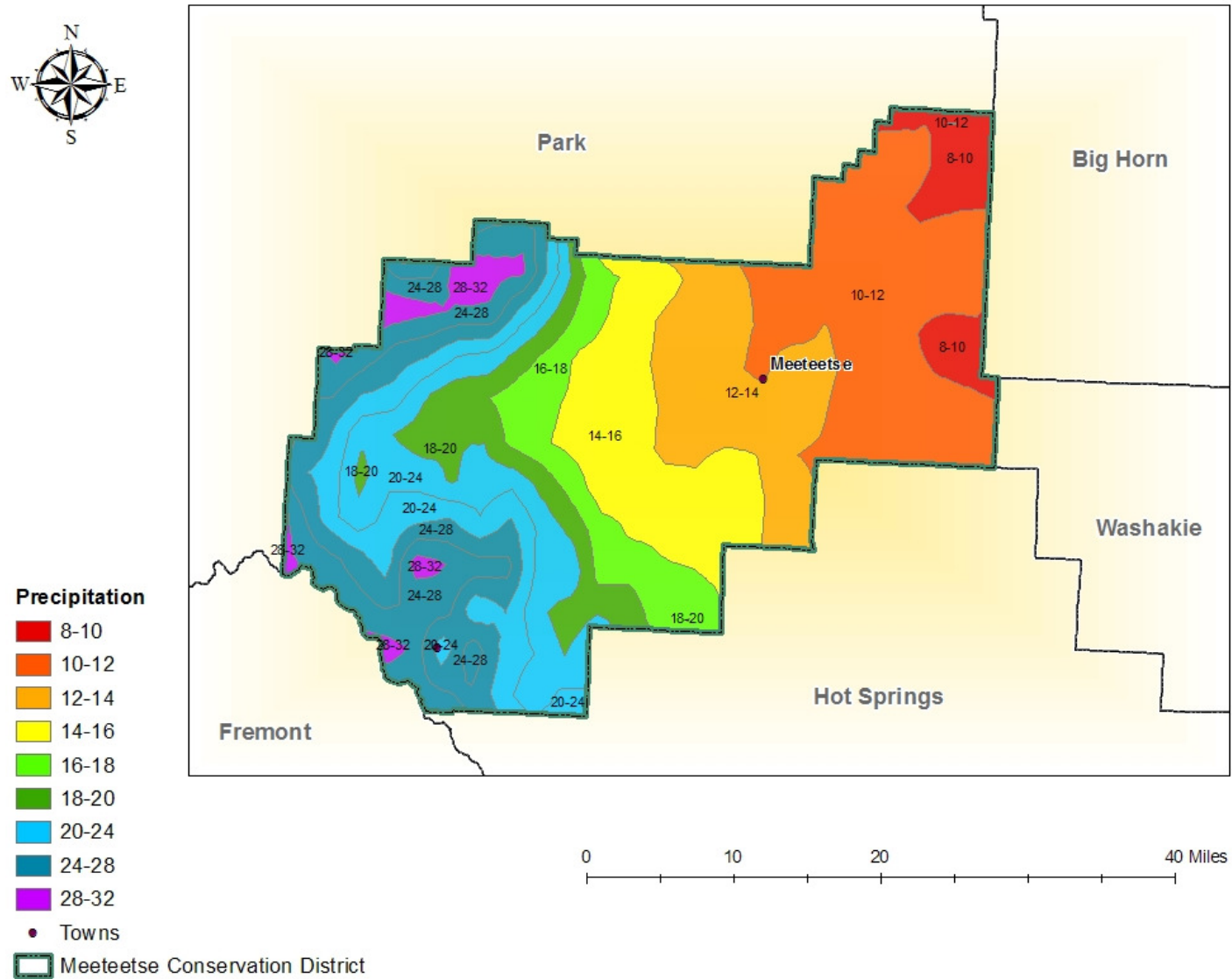
2 Map 1: General Location Map



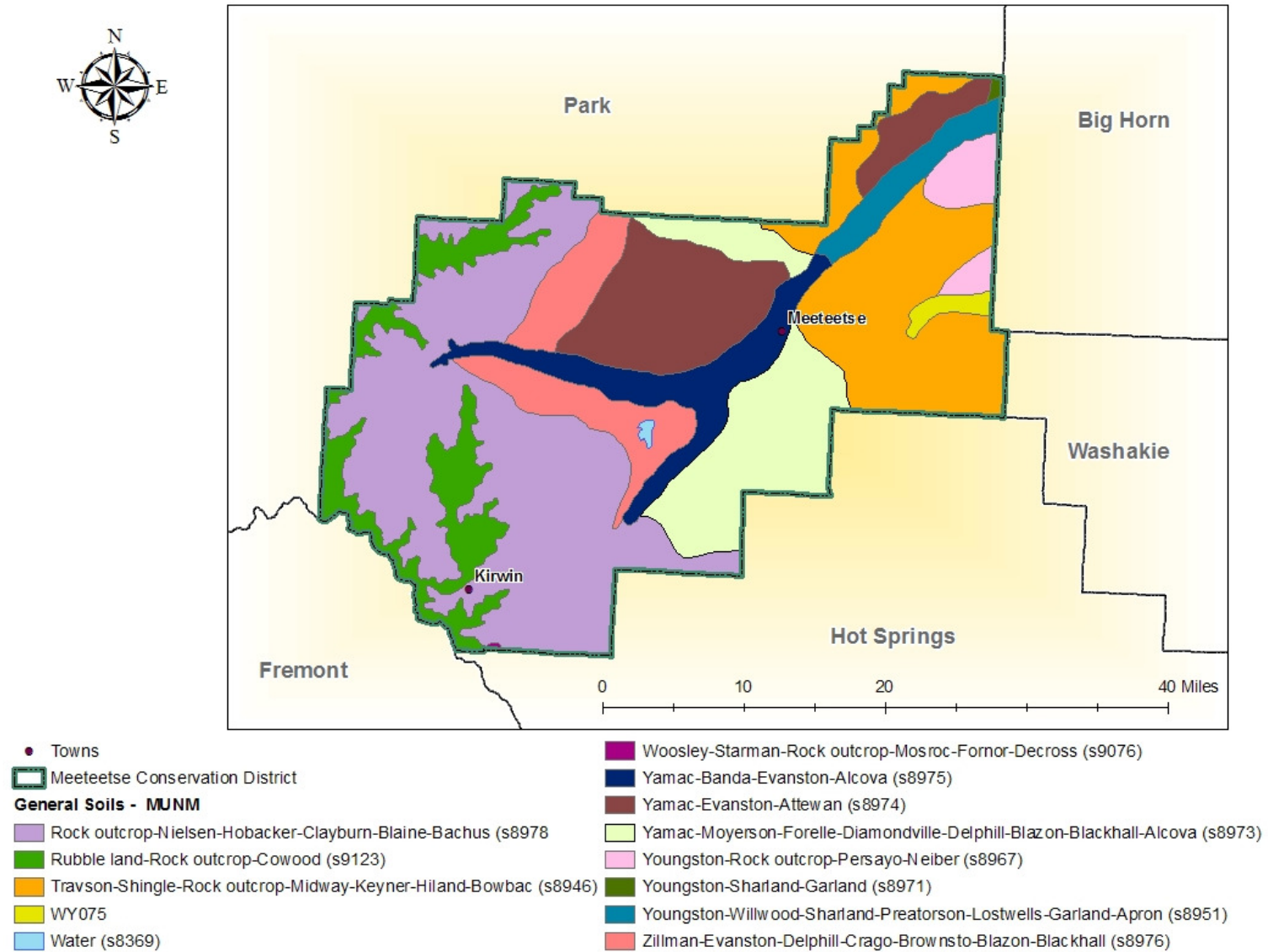
1 Map 2: Geographic Features



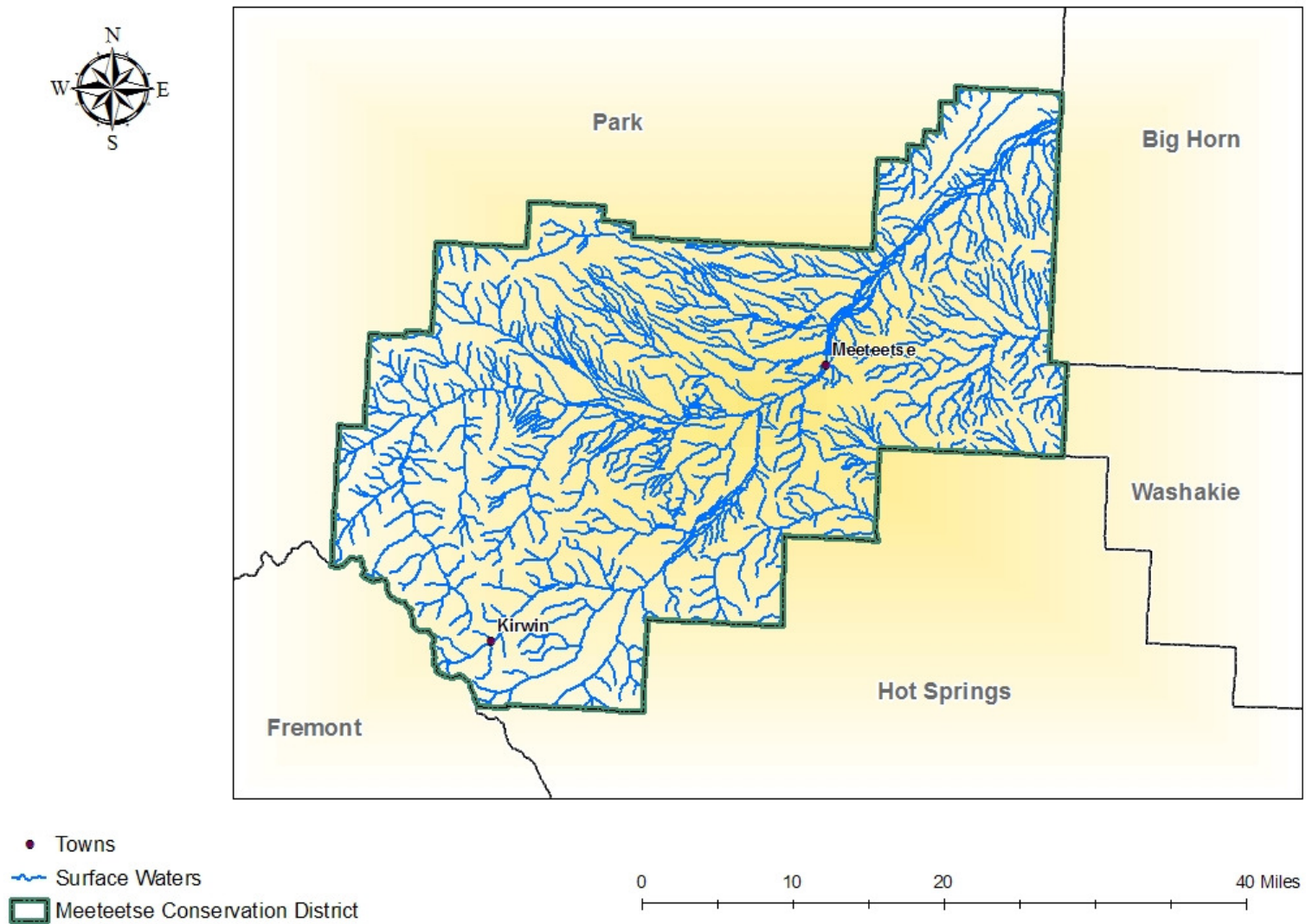
1 Map 3: *Land Ownership*



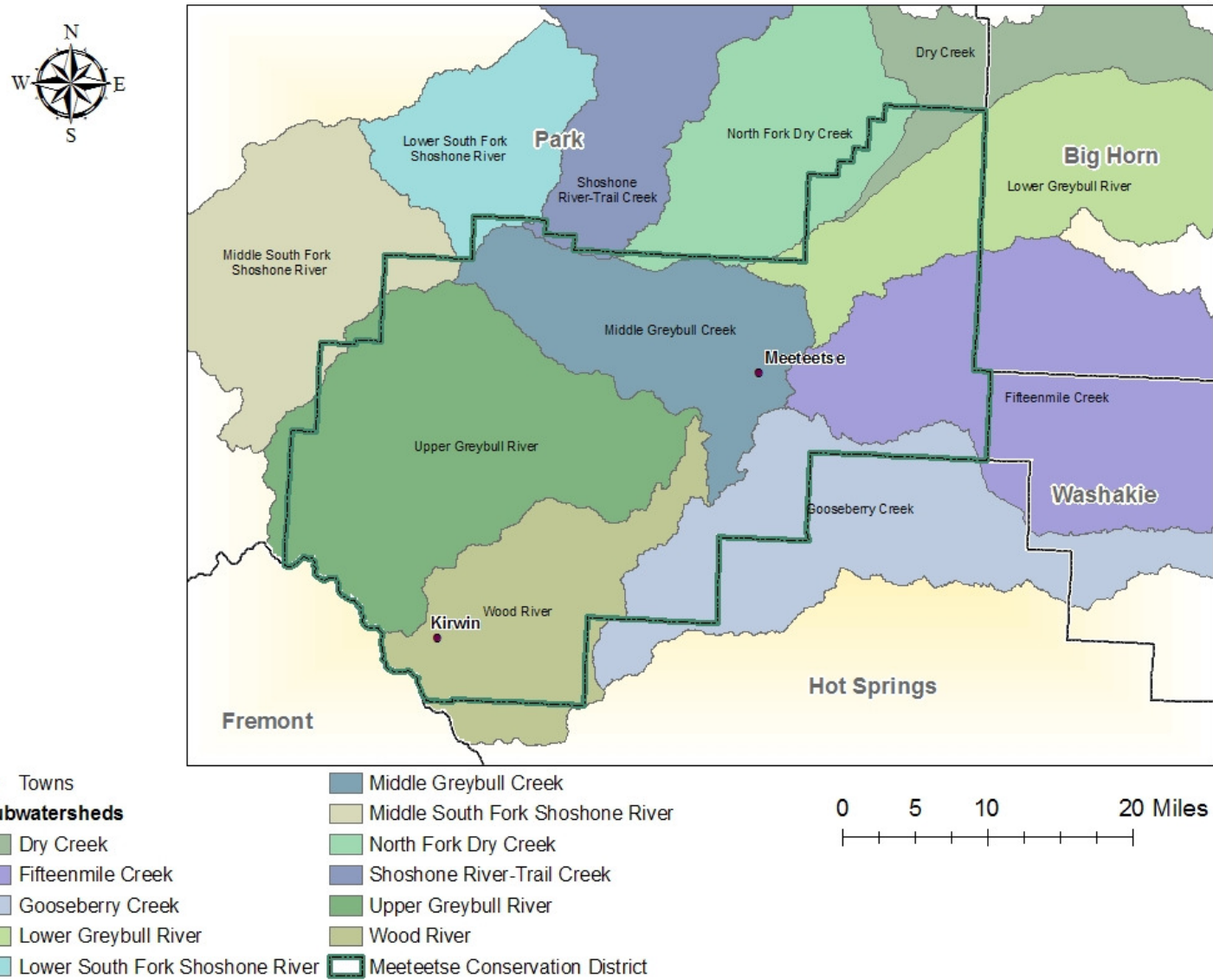
1 Map 4: *Precipitation*



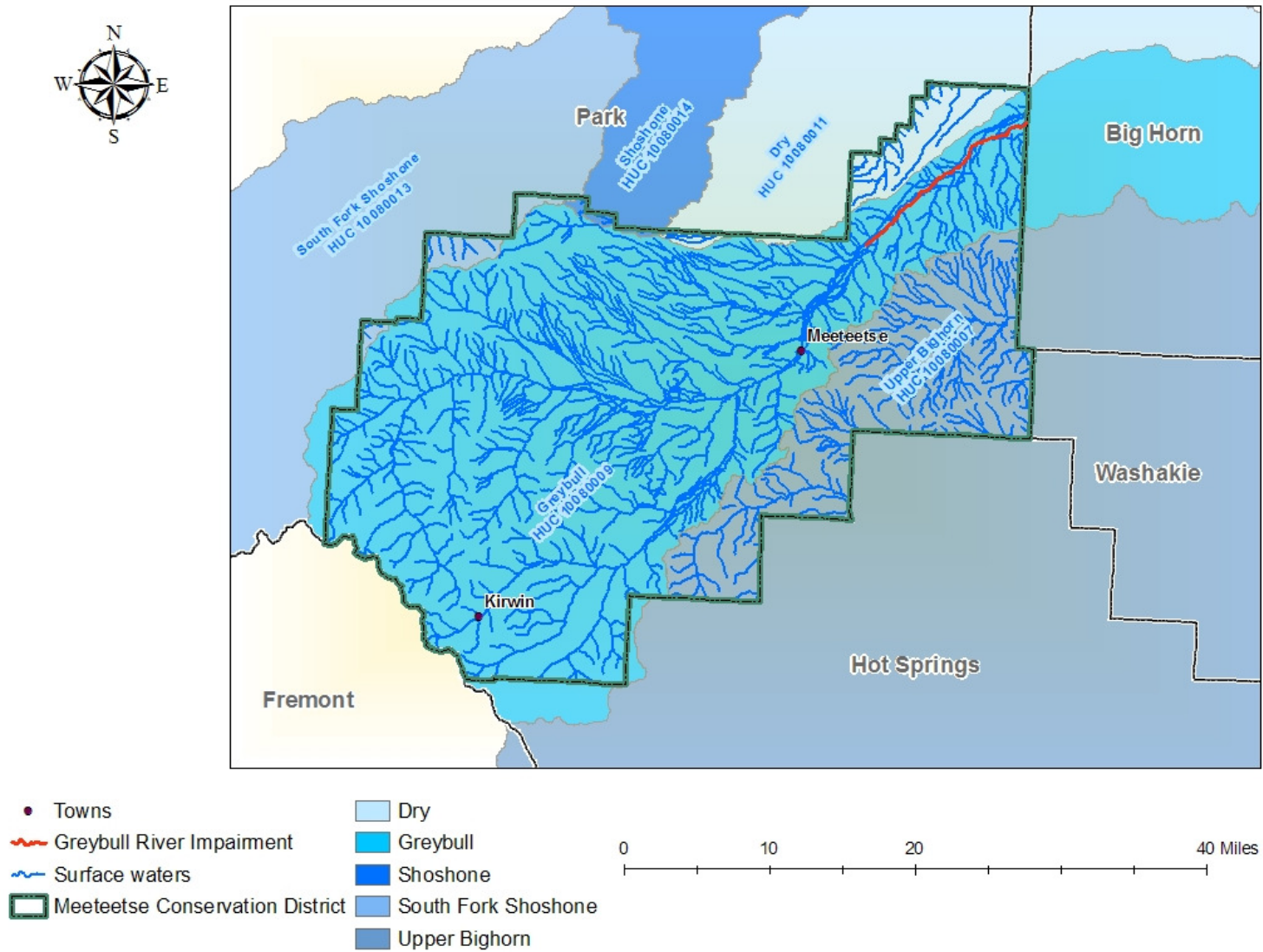
1 Map 5: *General Soils*



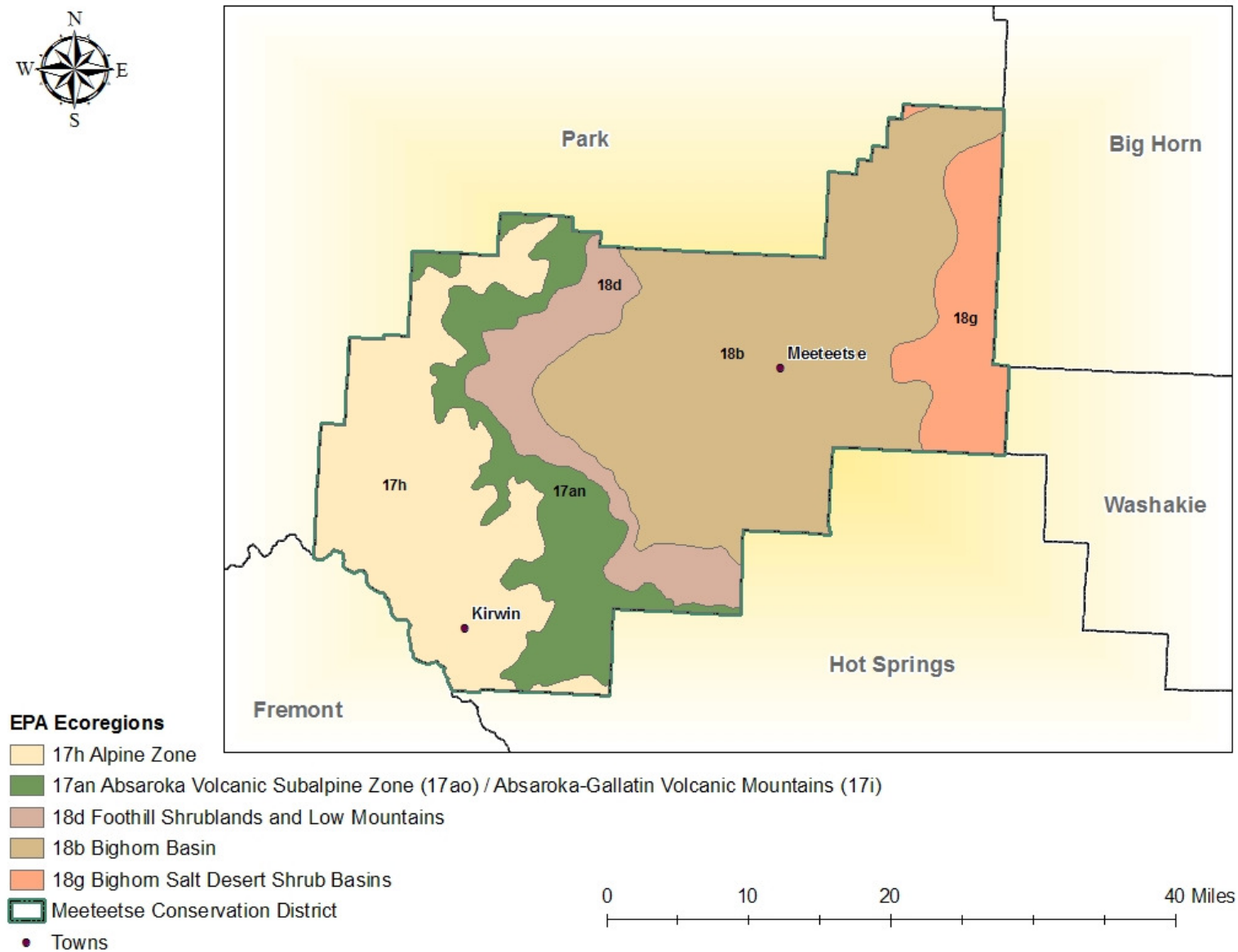
1 Map 6: *Surface Waters*

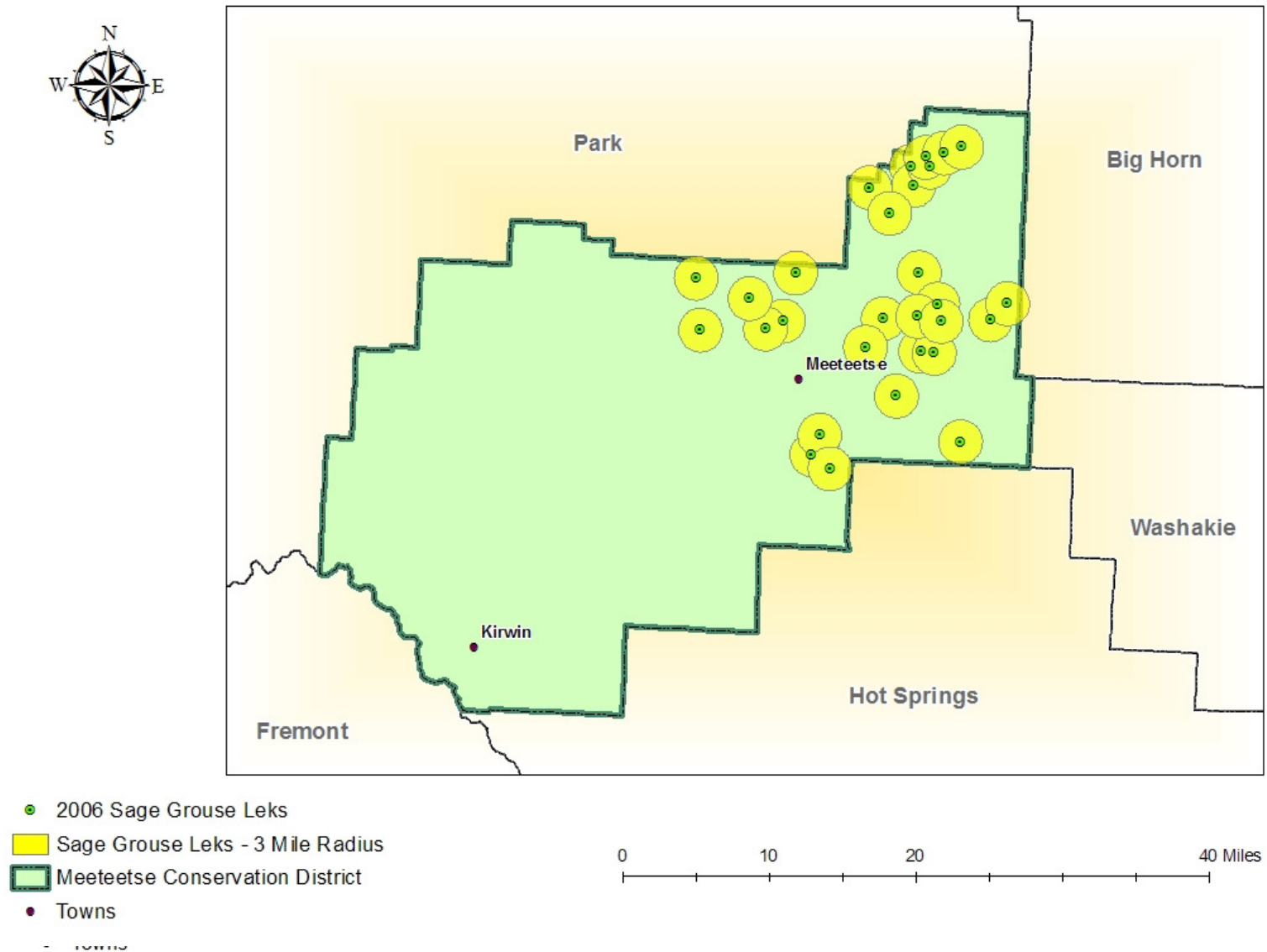


1 Map 7: *Subwatersheds*

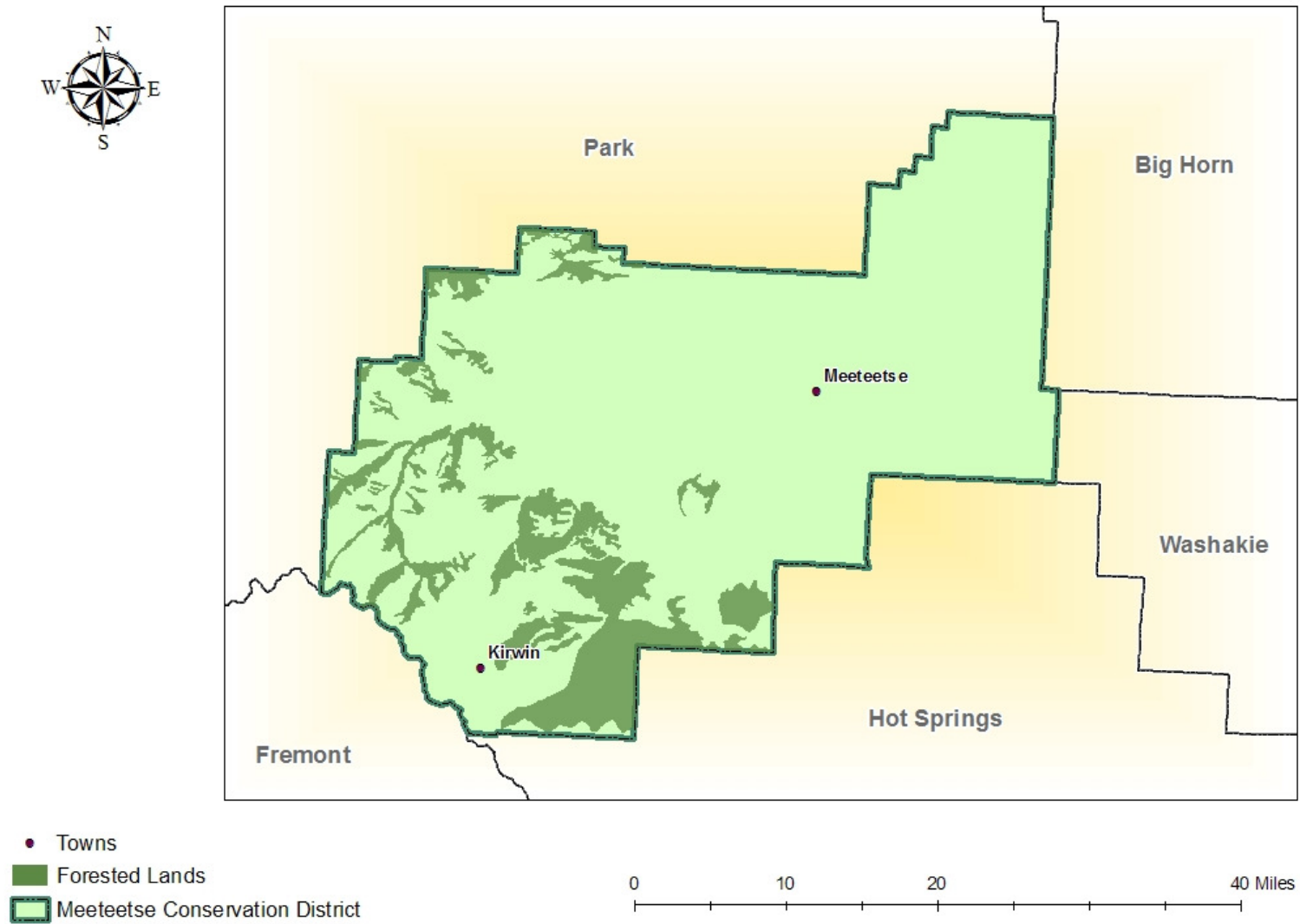


1 Map 8: *DEQ-WQD Impaired Waters*

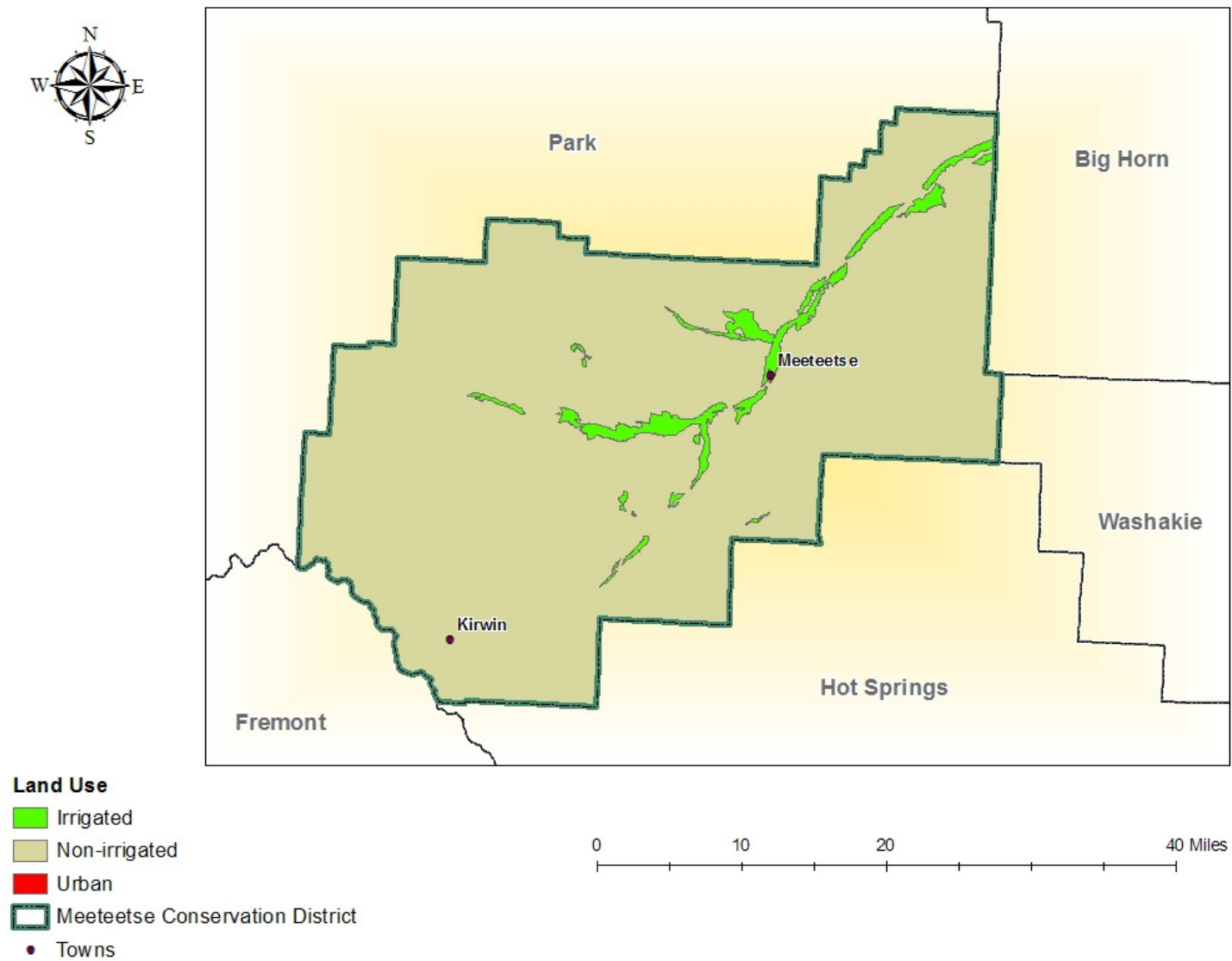




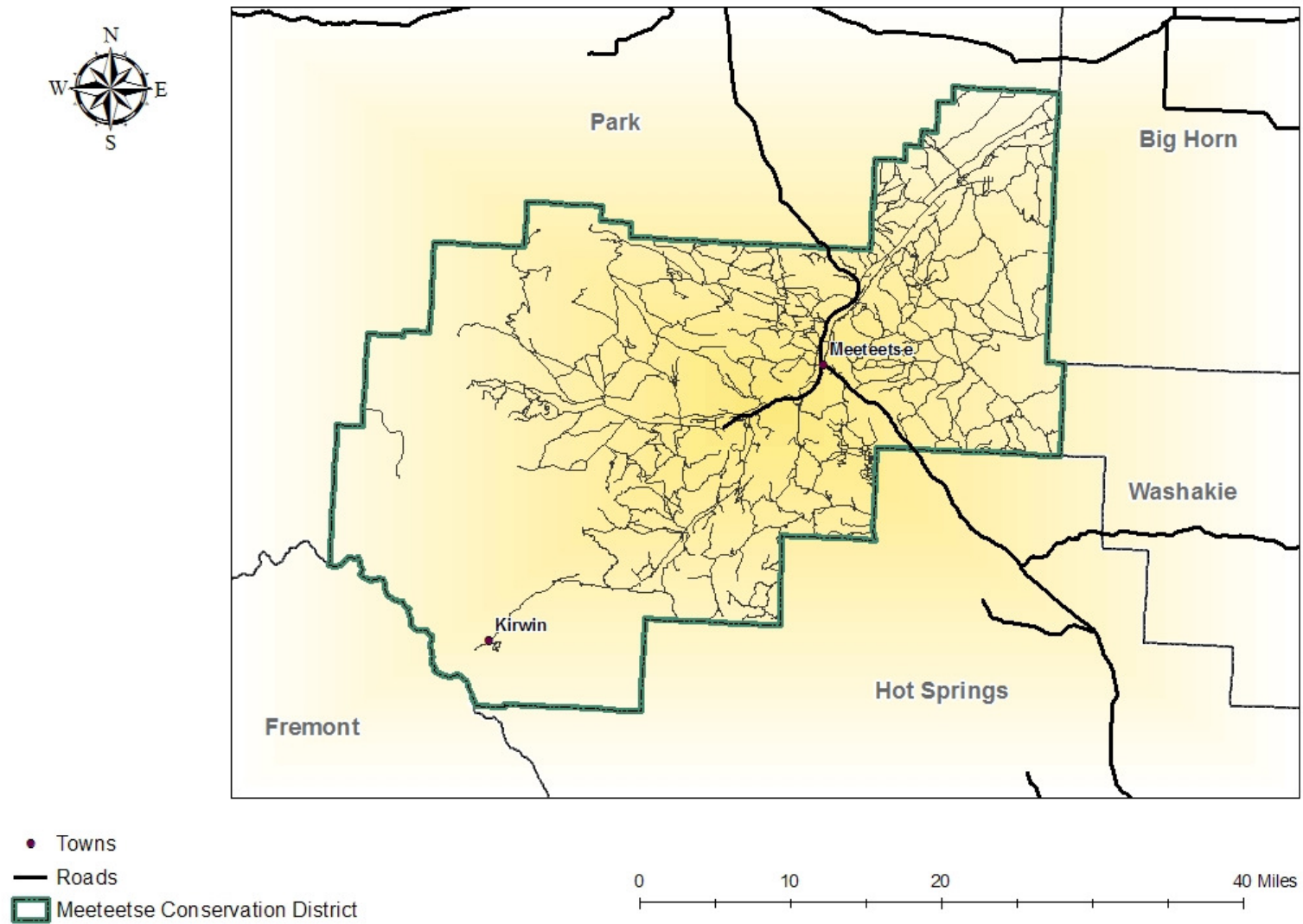
1 Map 10: *Sage Grouse Leks and 3-mile Radius*



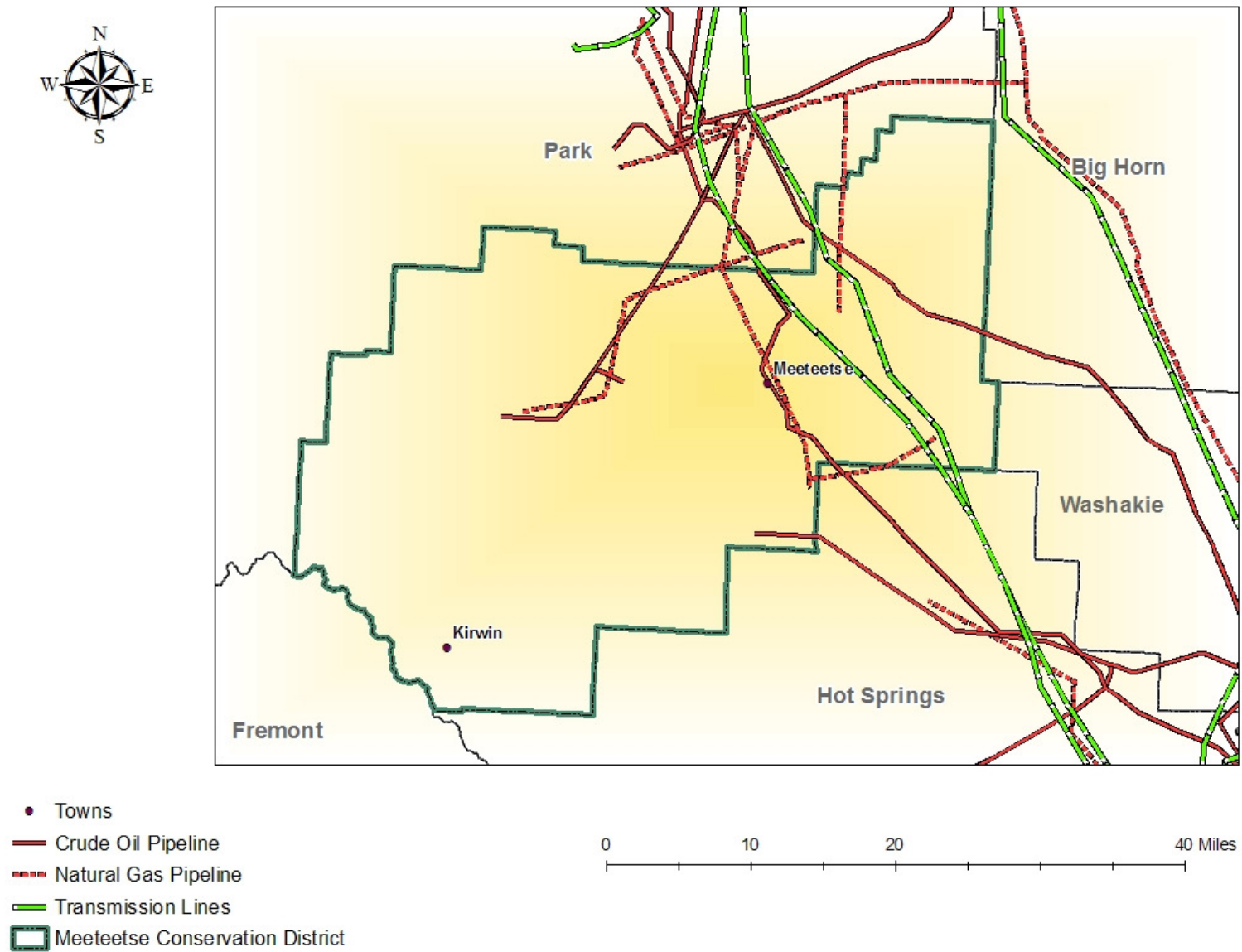
1 Map 11: *Forested Lands*



1 Map 12: *Land Use and Irrigated Lands*



1 Map 13: *Roads*



1 Map 14: *Pipelines and Transmission Lines*